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1.8 million U.S. workers crippled each year by Repetitive Stress Injuries

Bush: Trust your boss

More than a year after overturning ergonomics standards developed by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration, the Bush administration announced a new "plan" April 5 that relies on the bosses to decide what protections workers need against the U.S.'s biggest job safety problem – injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome caused by repetitive motions, heavy lifting and poorly designed work.

The Bush plan does not outline an ergonomics standard; rather it simply promises to eventually develop voluntary guidelines for selected, as yet unidentified, industries and to "urge" companies to adopt them. Instead of fixing dangerous workplace hazards, the plan relies on voluntary cooperation and outreach tools such as web sites.

How the Labor Department would implement even this limited plan is a mystery, as Bush has proposed cutting OSHA's enforcement and training budget by more than $10 million and job safety research funding by $20 million.

"Today we've got an announcement that contains no enforceable regulations, relies totally on voluntary actions and does not even identify the industries that OSHA will focus on," said Peg Seminario, director of the AFL-CIO's safety and health department.

In the year since Bush repealed the ergonomics standard, some 1.8 million U.S. workers have suffered ergonomic injuries, many of which could have been prevented. At least 600,000 workers are forced from their jobs each year by these injuries.

These disorders affect a wide array of workers, including construction workers and secretaries, farm workers and meatpackers, postal sorters and deliverers. They result from a variety of activities, including hand harvesting, sewing, typing, lifting heaving objects and operating machinery in factories.

"Ergonomics is not an exotic problem

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U.S. Supreme Court rejects immigrant workers' rights



RINI TEMPLETON

BY JOSHUA FREEZE

The Supreme Court of the United States recently dealt a major blow to labor unions and immigrant rights groups, ruling 5 to 4 that immigration controls take precedence over labor law in a case denying back pay to Jose Castro, an undocumented worker who was fired for union activity. The court accepted the National Labor Relations Board's ruling that Hoffman Plastics violated the law in firing Castro and Chief Justice Rhenquist, writing for the majority, upheld the order to post notice of workers' rights and Hoffman's violations, but overturned an award of back pay.

The March 27 ruling stated the NLRB's back pay award would "condone prior violations of the immigration laws, and encourage future violations." Rhenquist wrote that the court has "never deferred to the Board's remedial preferences where such preferences potentially trench upon federal statutes and policies unrelated to the NLRA." This position firmly places labor law in a subordinate position to every other law.

This ruling is a victory for employers. Leaving aside the fundamental problem of national borders and illegalizing people, even the moderate Justice Breyer, in his dissent, notes that far from being a deterrent to employment of the undocumented, this ruling encourages it. The denial of back pay "lowers the cost to the employer of an initial labor law violation (provided, of course, that the only victims are illegal aliens). It thereby increases the employer's incentive to find and to hire illegal-alien employees." "In the absence of the back pay weapon, employers could conclude that they can violate the labor laws at least once with impunity." "The court's rule offers employers immunity in borderline cases, thereby encouraging them to take risks, i.e., to hire with a wink and a nod those potentially unlawful aliens whose unlawful employment (given the Court's views) ultimately will lower the costs of labor law violations." Thus even by the government's own standards this ruling will not stem the tide of immigrant workers.

Neither side of the court mentioned the fourteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which states among other things that the government shall not "deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." The constitution uses the word "person," not "citizen," but apparently the justices failed to recognize Jose Castro as a person.

This ruling should come as no surprise, though. Immigration policy in the United States, as with all policy, is geared to the desires of capitalists, not the needs of workers. This ruling subordinates one of the

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Labor crisis in the European Union:

Internationalism offers only way out

BY MORGAN MILLER

The recent meeting of the European Union in Barcelona shows that international capitalism is preparing new attacks upon workers' living standards. Since the 1950s, workers in the EU member nations have had the best living and working conditions in the world. In most of the EU, workers have full health care and six weeks paid vacation. In some countries, there is even a move toward a 35-hour work week.

Given the globalization of trade, these conditions are under increasing attack, supposedly in order to compete with other economies, especially the United States. In order to become "competitive," European business and financial groups are pushing for economic "reforms" along the lines of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and former U.S. President Ronald Reagan.

Labor Flexibility?

What international finance capital is looking for is "flexible" labor markets. In everyday terms this means employers are seeking greater numbers of part-time and temporary workers to be available on call. This Thatcher/Reagan-era employment model has been promoted for almost 20 years. In the U.S. we have seen what this kind of economic restructuring means, an increase in hours worked, workers forced to take several jobs to make ends meet, and no social benefits like health insurance.

In Barcelona a new bloc was formed to push for a Thatcherite economic program. This grouping was formed by Italian right-wing PM Silvio Berlusconi, Spanish PM Jose Maria Aznar (also right-wing) and UK PM Tony Blair, supposedly Labour-left.

Several years ago, the European Union meetings in Lisbon came up with a series of accords on EU economic goals, especially those dealing with labor: "Europe should become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion." To get there the following policies would be followed: "Promoting active labor market policies targeted at full employment. ... Modernizing social protection and combating social exclusion. Fostering innovation through better policies for the information society and R&D. Stepping up the process of structural reforms of products and capital markets."

All these promises sound good, but what do they mean in real life? In Barcelona, EU ministers announced one piece of the puzzle, raising the retirement age from 58 years to 65. While this might not sound so bad to North Americans, it is a significant increase in the number of years Europeans are expected to work. This is what they meant by "modernizing social protection."

At the EU meetings, European business organizations fought against workers' rights: "Accusing member states of 'dragging their feet' on economic reform, they demanded Brussels abandon proposed guidelines on company restructuring, which could make it harder for businesses to 'hire and fire' staff.

"Digby Jones, CBI director-general, also criticised a draft directive that would give temporary workers rights comparable with those of permanent employees, claiming it would remove incentives to take on 'temps.' 'Companies want to find ways of encouraging job creation. But, too often, they are on the back foot, fighting to resist the latest attack on labour market flexibility.' " (*London Financial Times* 3/5/02)

No Consensus, yet

But the European ruling class isn't completely sold on the Anglo-American model of economics. As Anna Diamantopoulou, the EU's employment and Social Affairs Commissioner, said, "I fear seeing the word flexibility as a panacea for our unemployment problem. You can see in some member states, where there is strong social legislation, there is higher productivity and foreign investment. This is clear proof that flexibility is

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From Port Huron* to Kent State

Readers' Soapbox

Like you, we work at the things we do because we believe a better world is possible. Moved by the urgencies of the global situation some of us have come together in exploratory gatherings, held in Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania, during which we shared experiences as members of a multiplicity of movements.

We are anti-globalization activists, rank-and-file union members, students, anti-death penalty activists, peace movement activists, members of past and present movements for social and economic justice and civil rights, labor movement organizers and officials, and many others. We are people of different ages and backgrounds who come from varied Rust Belt locations, such as Toledo, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Detroit, Ann Arbor, East Lansing, Chicago, Youngstown and Philadelphia. We share common traditions of participatory democracy and self-activity.

Encouraged by what we have learned about each other, and by the sense of community we have created, we are determined to broaden the scope of our solidarity with others who work to make the planet a better place. *We are not creating a new organization.*

A horizontal movement

We invite you to participate in a movement-building conference at Kent State University, May 31-June 2. We envision a movement in which we organize and support one another by reaching out to each other horizontally, rather than indirectly through representatives and policy-makers of centralized bodies or hierarchies. As members of diverse movements, our beliefs regarding methods for achieving change may often differ, but surely, because we share core values, ideals, and hopes for a better world, we can find ways to address issues that are important to us all. We share a collective interest in the welfare of future generations and the welfare of the planet that can transcend and transform our differences. Like you, we seek a politics that touches the heart and turns the heart. We believe in accompanying one another, in resisting the tendency to make our ideals into dogmas, as we struggle to change the world.

Help us move toward a convergence of our separated movements and struggles... Bring your needs to the conference: what do you need to learn from others in other movements that you can take back to enrich your daily work? Bring to the conference what you can contribute: what are your stories, your experience and your knowledge?

An agenda from below

We have all been to innumerable conferences the agendas for which were fixed far in advance. Speakers whom we did not select made 55-minute presentations followed by five minutes for us to "discuss" what we had heard.

We wish to attempt something different. The conference will begin with supper on Friday May 31 and end with lunch Sunday June 2. Friday evening and Sunday morning will be "plenaries": times when we will all be together. During the day Saturday we want to have workshops, but workshops that you will help to define. Saturday evening we'll have a party, when Mike Stout, former grievance committee chair at the U.S. Steel Homestead Works and singer/songwriter, will lead us in singing and celebration. Please bring your posters, button collections and art work to decorate the space in which we will gather. Please bring your instruments and songs you can perform (and may have composed).

We envision the conference workshops as times when smaller groups can clarify particular themes of our common struggle, and form mini-networks of folks who will want to work together in the future. Here are some of the questions that we believe are on many of our minds:

How can we resist the war system that surrounds us?

What have we learned in the past forty years about building a movement made up of persons of different races and genders?

When we say "another world is possible," what do we mean? How can we begin, now, to create an alternative to capitalism?

How should we be preparing for the meeting of capitalist leaders in western Canada late in June? Are demonstrators at big anti-globalization events burning out?

What do demonstrators do between demonstrations?

What strategy should underlie our labor work? What do we visualize as the role of independent local unions, of local unions that are part of existing national unions, of ad hoc central labor bodies?

How can the 90 percent of workers not in unions take collective action and establish their rights?

A number of resource people are available to help with workshops, such as Alexis Buss of the IWW; Peter Linebaugh, co-author of *The Many-Headed Hydra*; Tom Laney, who works for Ford in the Twin Cities; and a representative of the Charleston Five.

Tony Budak, Dominic Caruso, Alan Haber, Staughton & Alice Lynd, Mike Stout

For more information, or to register (pre-registration is requested by May 15, but onsite registration will be accepted): Website: http://porthurontokentstate.tripod.com; mail: the Lynds, 1694 Timbers Court, Niles OH 44446; email: salynd@aol.com (Lynds), megiddo@umich.edu (Haber), abudak@neo.rr.com (Budak), steel.printers@verizon.net (Stout) dconebigunion@hotmail.com (Caruso).

*Port Huron, Michigan, was the meeting place at which a statement of vision and program was created in 1962 by Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

MayWorks

The IWW Vancouver will show labor films as part of the MayWorks Festival (http://www.tao.ca/~mayworks) at the SFU Habour Centre (515 West Hastings): "The Wobblies," May 3, 7 p.m.; "Live Nude Girls UNITE!" May 10, 6 p.m., with speaker Carol Leigh, who has received many awards for her documentaries on women's and gay/lesbian issues.

The IWW Vancouver will also sponsor a workshop, "Know Your Rights," at the Centre May 27 (6 p.m.) for workers interested in learning about the government's proposed changes to BC's Labour Code and how to begin organizing their workplace.

May Day in Maine

The IWW is spearheading efforts to celebrate International Workers Day in Lewiston, with an evening rally in Kennedy Park beginning at 5 p.m. The rally will link the historic fight for the eight hour day with the 1987 Jay paperworkers' strike against 12-hour shifts and the ongoing resistance against globalized oppression and economic slavery.

Boston: Cut the work week

The Boston GMB is sponsoring a forum on the struggle for the four-hour work day May 1 at 8 p.m. (Lucy Parsons Center, 549 Columbus Ave.), as part of the week-long Festival del Pueblo which will include a book fair, marches, workshops, lectures, and cultural events. (www.festivaldelpueblo.org)

Wobblies will also join a May Day rally demanding legalization for undocumented workers, at 3:30 on the Boston Common.

On May 12, the Branch will sponsor a panel on shorter working hours (1 p.m., 565 Boylston Ave.), kicking off a broader campaign around the issue.

San Francisco Bay Area

A May Day parade will begin at 2 p.m. from 24th & Mission in San Francisco, culminating activities reclaiming the workers' holiday. (www.festivalsofresistance.net)

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★ EDUCATION
★ EMANCIPATION

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IWW group forms in Peterborough

BY PAUL BROCKING

Following a very productive meeting March 25, the nucleus of a Peterborough branch emerged. At the gathering it was decided to begin organizing campaigns in the restaurant and grocery store sectors where most of us work and have many contacts.

We also discussed a number of projects which we will undertake in the near future. These include investigating a local temp agency for conditions at the factories and shops that workers are assigned to. In addition, we may launch public information campaigns around Wal-Mart and particularly exploitative fast-food outlets.

To promote further awareness and to fundraise, we are also interested in organizing labour film nights and similar events. Our first project will be to organize a local May Day event.

Milwaukee marks Bay View massacre

BY SKIP PORTER, X352453

The 116th anniversary of the 1886 Bay View Tragedy will be commemorated Sunday, May 5, at 3 p.m. at the Bay View Historical Marker Site on Milwaukee's southern lakefront. Unionists and Milwaukee area residents memorialize the tragedy that unfolded when the state militia fired upon several thousand workers marching for the 8-hour day. Seven were killed. The tragedy is the deadliest in Wisconsin labor history.

The program will include songs from FW Larry Penn, remarks from Milwaukee's most recent Socialist mayor Frank P. Zeidler, and placing a wreath at the site. Sara Rogers of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO will also speak.

The ceremony will be held at the Bay View Rolling Mills Historical Marker site at S. Superior St. and E. Russell Ave., located about one-half mile from the south end of the Hoan Bridge. (Use Harbor Exit - S. Superior St.) For further information see www.wisconsinlaborhistory.org.

Chicago May Day events benefit OCAP defendants

Chicago Wobs are cosponsoring two benefit showings of a video on the Battle of Seattle, along with music and poetry, April 30 (2129 N Milwaukee) and May 1 (2600 W Fullerton), both at 7 p.m. Proceeds will benefit the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, several of whose members have been arrested in recent actions.

The Chicago GMB is also joining a Carnival Against Capitalism Sunday, April 28, 10 a.m., at Douglas Park. On May 3, "The Wobblies" will be shown, and of May 19 (6:30, 2129 N Milwaukee) General Executive Board member Mike Hargis will speak as part of a program on Working-Class Revolution. A May Day party sponsored by the Chicago May Day Coalition at the Hot House will begin (7 p.m.) with a forum on business control of government and conclude with music of revolution and resistance.

The Edmonton IWW
General Membership Branch

Solidarity Greetings for May Day:

"Build the Global General Strike!"

http://edmonton.iww.ca

San Jose picket fights Macy's firings

BY ADAM WELCH

A lively community picket of over 200 gathered outside of Macy's at Valley Fair Mall in San Jose, Calif., February 24 to demand the rehiring of two fired Macy's clerks, Alia Atawneh and Hiam Yassine. The two Muslim Palestinian women immigrants were fired in the months after the events of Sept. 11. Both have lawsuits pending against Macy's, owned by Federated Department Stores.

"The people are what you're facing, if you don't stop the hating," chanted community members and labor activists as they picketed a store entrance for two hours. An hour into the protest a delegation attempted to enter the store to present demands to Macy's management. Managers initially refused to let them enter, but were pressured to open the doors by the vocal crowd.

Macy's spokesperson Rina Neiman, who refused any comments until the day of the rally, was quoted in the *Mercury News* saying, "There's been so much misinformation about this that we felt we had to let people know our position." A Macy's press release claiming the firings were due to Atawneh making disruptive comments and Yassine not following company policy. The firings were "completely unrelated and have nothing to do with discrimination," said Neiman.

The protest was organized by the San Francisco and San Jose Coalitions to Rehire Alia and Hiam, composed of Arab, Muslim, peace and youth activists including Silicon Valley De-Bug, a San Jose organization of young working adults and artists. The Bay Area IWW Branch is involved in the coalition and attended the protest and brought picket signs.

Atawneh, the first woman fired, is a 29-year-old Palestinian immigrant pregnant with her first son. On Sept. 27 a customer berated her, saying that she had no right to work in the United States and that "her people" were responsible for the events of Sept. 11.



In a break from picketing, protesters watch a street theater performance linking the Macy's firings, the war in Afghanistan, President Bush and the media.

Atawneh replied that the customer had no right to talk to her that way, prompting him to complain to management. Within a week, Atawneh says, human resource managers called a meeting to question her about the incident. They also claimed that two employees alleged that she expressed anti-American sentiments supposedly by saying, "America deserved it." Atawneh denies saying or supporting this statement.

"It would not happen probably if it were union," Alia's husband Zak Khanfar said, referring to the firings.

Yassine, a 39-year-old woman who is also Palestinian, has been a top seller of Macy's handbags for several years since she started in 1997. She was fired Jan. 5 after she gave a 10 percent discount to a customer, which she claims was standard practice among her co-workers. Yassine believes her firing was due to co-workers feeling uncomfortable as she wears a head covering common to Muslim women called a hijab.

"It hurt me so much," said Yassine. Macy's says Atawneh and Yassine's firings are unrelated and that Yassine broke the policy as listed in their employee handbook.

Sept. 11 backlash

Aisha Memon works in retail and is a member of a Muslim student group. "I work with customers and I was really scared. I was like, whoa, it's happening here. It changed my views of how I was dealing with customers and co-workers," said Memon.

"This is not an isolated incident, we know of many instances of discrimination across Silicon Valley," said Maha Algdanede, a member of the Santa Clara County Human Relations Committee which is investigating the incident. The committee is awaiting a response to its letter asking for Macy's side of the story and at their March 26 meeting

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Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

Join the IWW Today

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially – that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to strengthen workers' ability to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification or employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract. Sometimes it means refusing to work with an unsafe machine or following the bosses' orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, decisions about what issues to address and what tactics to pursue are made by the workers directly involved.

TO JOIN: Mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and your first month's dues to: IWW, Post Office Box 13476, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

Initiation is the same as one month's dues. Our dues are calculated according to your income. If your monthly income is under $1,000, dues are $6 a month. If your monthly income is between $1,000 - $2,000, dues are $12 a month. If your monthly income is over $2,000 a month, dues are $18 a month.

- ❑ I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer
- ❑ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution
- ❑ I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.



Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Occupation: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker.

PRAISE BOSS!



BY F.N. BRILL

It's the 100th anniversary of the birth of the great novelist, John Steinbeck. I'll celebrate with a quote from Cannery Row. "It has always seemed strange to me, the things we admire in men, kindness and generosity, openness, honesty, understanding and feeling are the concomitants of failure in this system. And the traits we detest, sharpness, greed, acquisitiveness, meanness, egotism and self-interest are the traits of success."

I read that the Canadian right-populist Alliance Party has asked the Tories to make an agreement to not contest each other where the other is strong. I wonder if Alliance's appeal to the floundering Conservative Party is a rare case of rats climbing aboard a sinking ship?

Speaking of rats and sinking ships. The largest U.S. investment bank, Morgan-Stanley has announced that its is significantly lowering its level of investments from the United States and shifting them to the European Union. What do they know we aren't being told?

Two workers are talking in the break room. One asks the other, "Is it true that economists are scientists?" "Yeah" is the reply. The first says: "Then why don't they experiment on animals first?"

One of the great subversives of the 20th century left us when Chuck Jones died in February. Jones, one of the folks who brought us Bugs Bunny, I think encouraged many people's nascent anti-authoritarian tendencies, certainly mine. Since his death, I've been watching B.B. cartoons again and came across an obvious reference to a certain union when Bugs is shown with a picket sign saying "I Won't Work."

True story. Three Punque rockers came into the café the other day. All nice and clean they each ordered an expensive coffee drink, didn't tip and sat down at a table. They then proceeded to pull out and discuss the Maoist *Revolutionary Worker* newspaper. After discussting how to best rescue the peasants and workers of the world, they left a mess including unbussed glasses in their wake. Mao said, "Serve the people"; now I know how the Maoists apply the teaching.

Now here's a story. The U.S. Internal Revenue Service has been investigating offshore tax evasion. According to the *New York Times* (March 26) 1 to 2 million people, "most believed to be in the top 1 percent of taxpayers," are avoiding paying taxes by banking overseas and using credit cards to access their tainted money. Since the "top 1 percent" only contains around 1 or 2 million people what is being left unsaid is that all the very rich are tax frauds. So why in hell did this bunch of cheats get that huge tax break? It's obvious that the rich are organized to siphon OUR wealth to them. So why don't we organize and siphon OUR wealth back? Our power comes when we reach into the bosses' wallets at the point of production.

"Poor people break the laws, the rich only evade them." — T. Bone Slim

Back to U.S. taxes. One amendment of the U.S. economic recovery package that didn't get passed was a section on tax rebates for poor people. So now, there will be dramatically less tax returns for the poorest people in the U.S. next year because? Yes! There are only enough funds for rebates for the rich!

We owe it to the stockholders! This is the litany we are given to explain all sorts of economic attacks on the working class, communities and the environment. Always the stockholders, never the folks who produce the wealth. But have you ever thought why the stockholders deserve all this pandering? I recently realized that the money people use to buy stocks doesn't even go to the companies. In most cases stock trading is between institutions like retirement and mutual funds and individuals, not the companies themselves. So what is owed stockholders, who don't even contribute money? The executives owe their jobs to the big banks, investment groups, etc.

Always remember three things fellow workers! Before this column passes away, I would like to tell a Wobbly story from the dim recesses of my past. When I was a baby wobbly I met an old-timer named Pete Wukazich. Pete was from the place formerly known as Yugoslavia and had been a building laborer all his life. When I met him he was dying and often in the hospital. One day a couple of us visited him at the local public hospital. With all his remaining strength Pete grabbed the collar of my jacket and yanked my head so I would face him. With the passion that befits any lifelong Wobbly, Pete told me, "Always remember three things:

"ONE! Never trust a cop!

"TWO! Always carry your red card!

"THREE! Capitalist Class (slaps his hands) are SONS OF BITCHES!"

F.N. Brill may be reached by telepathy, but not very well. e-mail does better at wobbly640@yahoo.co.uk Tokens of esteem, jokes, ideas, observations and unblemished semiprecious stones may also be sent to F.N. Brill c/o R&B Cafe, 2138 SE Division, Portland OR 97202 USA.

Happy May Day

from IU330

How much will tariffs cost steelworkers?

BY CHARLES WALKER

You can't blame steel workers for taking to the streets, demanding that their jobs be protected from the dog-eat-dog competition that's driving some steel companies into bankruptcy and steel workers onto unemployment lines. But sometimes when the demands of some steel workers are met, other steelworkers are forced out of their jobs...

On March 15, the *New York Times* reported that Brazilian steel workers were protesting at the U.S. consulate in Sao Paulo, calling on Brazilian legislators to impose tariffs on U.S. goods. Brazilian unions say that up to 5,000 steel workers will be negatively affected by a recent U.S. regulation imposing tariffs of up to 30 percent on some imported steel. An earlier *Times* report quoted British unionists as saying that the new U.S. steel tariffs could cost them 5,000 jobs.

Although the world's peoples could use steel for more schools, hospitals, libraries and the like, the worldwide steel industry has more capacity (and steel workers) than it can profitably use. As a consequence steel workers, in effect, fight other steel workers for the jobs that the steel bosses offer. As the AFL-CIO says, the international competition for jobs produces a "race to the bottom."

And, of course, such competition is contrary to workers' solidarity – the basic foundation of workers' power, and indeed the premise on which unions originated.

It's too early to total up the number of steel jobs that will be lost in the next period. But it's not too soon to point out that steel workers worldwide need a different strategy to cope with the crisis plaguing steel companies if they are to save their jobs and indeed help the world get the steel that many countries sorely need.

They need a different strategy simply because the present one isn't working, if the goal of the strategy is to save steel jobs, no matter where. But even if the goal is to save only the jobs of one nation's steel workers at the expense of others, the strategy has no long-term viability...

But who will be the first to proclaim that the steel workers' strategy is a dead-end race to the bottom that can't be halted soon enough? Will it be the U.S. Steelworkers Union, born of the heroic organizing drives against steel barons long known for their arrogance and brutality? Not likely, it seems. While the steelworkers union fights a rearguard battle to delay the inevitable shrinking of U.S. steel-making capacity, it merges with other unions, which helps pay the bills that maintain the privileged, secure lifestyles of the union's ruling elite.

In the weeks before Bush imposed new, three-year tariffs on some imported steel, the steelworkers' union lobbied legislators of both parties and brought to the nation's capital up to 30,000 steel workers and supporters to "stand up for steel." They were joined by steel company CEOs and politicians from both parties.

Some reports state that the Steelworkers Union and President Bush cut a deal, though they don't say it so bluntly. In return for the tariff, it's reported, Bush expects steelworkers to "remember in November."

The Steelworkers union planned to cope with the rise of fierce competition in the worldwide steel industry by making concession after concession to the steel bosses, and it's fair to say they carried out their plan to the letter. Nevertheless, hundreds of thousands of steelworkers lost their jobs. "The steel industry as we know it," the union recently complained, "is nearing extinction. Much of it has already crumbled." In other words, to judge from the number of lost jobs, the union's strategy has been a complete failure. It's as simple as that.

Things would be better for the union and the ranks if it would or could organize the nonunion U.S. steel plants that turn out 50 percent of the country's domestic steel, as imports account for a reported 18 percent of U.S. steel sales. While the union spends big bucks and mobilizes its members to march on Washington, hand in hand with the CEOs of the old-line steel industry, it's conspicuously silent about the unorganized segment of the domestic industry that should be on the receiving end of the union's organizational firepower.

Now let's see if we understand the steel union tops' thinking and why the ranks are taking one hit after another. Give the steel bosses concessions; ally first with one corporate political party and then the other; don't organize the unorganized; and pursue one merger after the other, no matter if it doesn't help the remaining unionized and working steel workers keep their jobs, their peace of mind, and their dignity in knowing that they won their own fights without slumming with the bosses.

Just a note to jobless steelworkers wondering where their next job is coming from: In France some occupations are very short of workers due to the adoption of a national 35-hour workweek. Now there's a strategy worth looking into, n'est-ce pas?

Macy's picket...

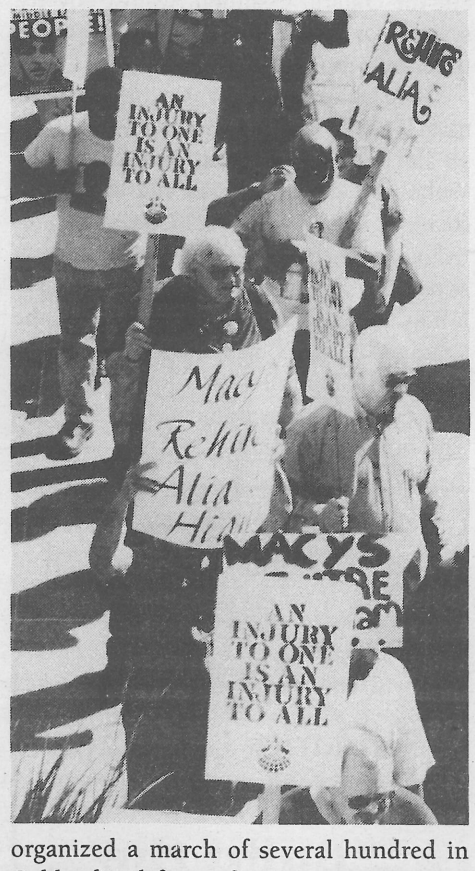
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resolved to send a second.

Many of Atawneh and Yassine's supporters believe their cases are part of a larger backlash against Middle-Eastern and South Asian communities since Sept. 11. Iman Farajalla of IMAN Networks, which runs a 24-hour Bay Area hate crimes hotline, spoke at the rally claiming, "We've had about 127 cases of discrimination against Muslims [reported to us]."

Government agencies that monitor discrimination have seen a sharp increase in reported cases. The Equal Opportunity Employment Commission, which handles complaints of workplace discrimination, has filed 42 formal charges against anti-Arab or Muslim discrimination in the San Francisco Bay Area. "With what [little] outreach we've done, the amount of charges we've received is unprecedented," said William Tamayo, regional attorney for the EEOC. Yet Tamayo notes that many incidents may go underreported since many in the Arab and Muslim community view the government with suspicion.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, the issue of how the events of Sept. 11 have affected workers has been prominent among some workers and unions. A rank-and-file initiated Labor Committee for Peace and Justice



organized a march of several hundred in Oakland in defense of airport screeners, port workers and service industry workers on March 23. All these workers have been faced with severe layoffs, increasingly restrictive security measures, or threats of outright firings and INS raids in the cases of airport

Locked-out Ponca City workers in global struggle

A year after they were locked out by Continental Carbon Corporation, Ponca City, Oklahoma, workers have taken their fight to Taiwan, where CCC parent Koo's Group is based. Continental Carbon is a major producer of carbon black, a petroleum byproduct used to manufacture tires and other synthetic rubber products.

Continental Carbon locked out 86 members of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers union May 7, 2001, after workers rejected concessions including wage cuts, steep increases in health premiums, elimination of retiree health insurance, unlimited contracting-out, and elimination of paid wash-up time. Working in carbon black is a dirty, hazardous job and at the end of a shift workers are black from head to toe, much like coal miners. Cutting bathhouse pay alone would cost workers about $4,000 per year.

Joined by dozens of Taiwanese activists, PACE representatives picketed Koo's Taiwan Cement Corp. offices in Taipei March 8, and met with representatives of the Taiwan Petroleum Workers Union, the Taiwan Confederation of Trade Unions, a local union representing workers at a carbon black plant in Kaohsiung, and environmentalists. PACE also ran newspaper ads aimed at educating the Taiwanese public about the Koo's Group's anti-worker and anti- environment policies.

"Our trip to Taiwan opened our eyes," said Todd Carlson, chairman of the union negotiating committee at Continental Carbon and a locked-out worker. "We learned that the Koo's group and Koo family have little respect for human dignity. Their intent is to destroy unions one plant at a time or to move the company's operations to mainland China where genuine labor unions and environmental protection are nonexistent."

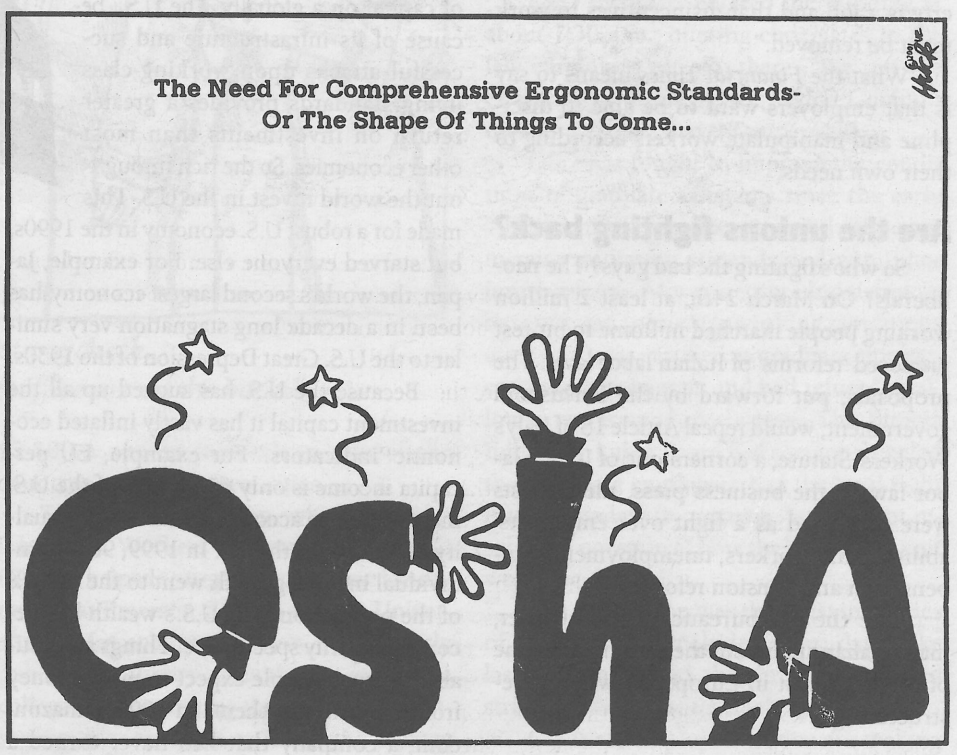
The Koo's Group is a global financial empire of banks, hotels and other investments valued at $53 billion. Its China Synthetic Rubber Corp. subsidiary is the world's fourth-largest carbon-black producer, operating plants in China, India, Taiwan and the United States. The company insists that the concessions it is demanding "conform with global trends."

In recent months, PACE has been reaching out for public support, establish a website (www.fightbackonline.org), picketing the homes of company executives, alerting environmentalists to Continental Carbon's history of dumping toxic wastes, and the recent trip to Taiwan.

PACE is also leafleting at Chinatrust banks in California and New York, which are also controlled by the Koo's group.

PACE representatives and the Ponca Tribe Environmental Agency uncovered a dump site on property adjacent to Continental Carbon in the flood plain next to the Arkansas River. The contents of the barrels appear to have spilled onto the soil and water, which drains downhill toward the river.

Workers have also leafleted at the Dayton Tire plant in Oklahoma City, one of several tire plants that buys carbon black from Continental Carbon. While unions throughout Oklahoma have taken up collections to help workers survive the lock-out, workers (most in unionized operations) continue to handle Continental Carbon product.



UAW abandons Accuride strikers

The United Auto Workers international abandoned Accuride workers March 28, in a one-sentence letter telling the company: "The International Union and its Local 2036 hereby disclaim interest in representing hourly employees at Accuride's Henderson, Kentucky facility."

With that decision, which workers learned of from reporters, the UAW ended a strike and lockout that began when more than 400 members walked off the job Feb. 20, 1998. They were locked out a few weeks later when they tried to return to their jobs.

While Accuride and the UAW were repeatedly been on the verge of settling the dispute, workers six times voted down proposals containing deep concessions. Instead, workers asked the UAW to urge union workers to refuse to install Accuride's scab-made tires on new trucks. UAW officials refused.

San Jose ACORN campaign closes

BY ADAM WELCH

Concluding the almost year-long campaign to support former San Jose ACORN members, the Bay Area IWW branch sent a Feb. 14 letter to over 20 community, religious and labor organizations explaining the events and asking for their support of ACORN workers currently organizing with the IWW in Portland and St. Petersburg, FL.

San Jose IWW organizers only made contact with ACORN employees after all but one had quit in protest over poor working conditions and unfair treatment in February 2001. Organizers worked with the five former employees and 10 ACORN members to support workers' complaints.

The former workers gained the support of the local NAACP and the IWW successfully pursued a Unfair Labor Practice charge for intimidation workers from organizing, which they won Oct. 11.

"Now I understand 100 percent why we needed a union," said former San Jose ACORN head of housing and employee Lyn Rose, who helped spearhead the union effort among her former co-workers and ACORN members. Rose also won a large workers compensation settlement with interest from an injury she suffered at ACORN that management refused to pay.

She is now employed as an investigator/advocate for the San Jose/Silicon Valley branch of the NAACP.

U.S. plans stepped-up audits of unions

The Bush administration has announced plans to crack down on unions that delay or fail to file required annual financial reports. Bush has requested an extra $3.4 million in next year's budget for the Labor Department's Office of Labor-Management Standards.

Unions are required to file annual financial reports within 90 days after their financial year ends. The government claims that about a third of unions were late or failed to file in 2000. The administration is also considering seeking authority to fine unions.

The Labor Department also is considering requiring more detailed reports, breaking out expenses for political activities, organizing and collective bargaining. Few unions could report such information, given that these functions often overlap.

S.F. Labor Council condemns Israel

The San Francisco Labor Council approved a resolution condemning Israel for suppressing "the Palestinian struggle for both statehood and ancestral lands" March 11.

The resolution also criticizes the United States for providing weapons to Israel.

The "Resolution on Mid-East Conflict," submitted by Charles Minster, a landscape gardener and labor council delegate, also accuses Israel of "oppressing and dividing the Jewish and Arab worker for the benefit of national and international capital" and criticizes the Israeli military for bombing Palestinian union offices in Nablus on Feb. 17.

"I believe there is not a ghetto in this country that can compare with Palestinian refugee areas as far as the horrors those people have to live through," said Minster.



"Wherever you find injustice, the proper form of politeness is attack."

— T-Bone Slim

(Matt Valentine Huhta, c1892-1942)

Harry Siitonen, Bay Area GMB

Ergonomics, continued from page 1

that affects only a few workers. Injuries occur in all types of workplaces all across the country," AFL President John Sweeney noted. "Workers in the poultry industry, who routinely process 95 birds a minute, suffer these injuries on an epidemic scale."

Businesses whose workers face high risk of musculoskeletal injuries lobbied hard to defeat the OSHA rules and spent freely to make their point with politicians. For example, United Parcel Service, which counts ergonomics among its top issues, was a top donor in the last election cycle, contributing almost $3 million.

In California, employers have been subject to ergonomic rules since 1997. These rules require employers to evaluate work sites and make sure they do not present risks of injury. If two workers doing the same task are injured within a 12-month period, state officials are supposed to inspect the workplace and can issue citations. However, from 1998 through 2001, the state made only 109 inspections and issued fines for less than $200,000.

The ergonomics debacle illustrates the utter futility of relying upon politicians and their masters, the employing class. It also illustrates the bankruptcy of business unionism. UPS has been unionized for decades, and has been crippling workers even longer.

Were workers organized on the job, educated about safety issues, and determined to enforce our rights through direct action, we wouldn't need to rely on government regulators and inspectors to keep us alive and healthy. Even those workers inclined to trust to politicians and the employing class might want to consider a strong dose or organization and direct action to keep them healthy during the long wait.

No Sweatshops Bucco!

Anti-sweatshop home opener

BY X346812, PITTSBURGH

The No Sweatshops Bucco! campaign at Pittsburgh's PNC Park has catapulted into the baseball season. The anti-sweatshop home opener took place at April 13th's game with the Chicago Cubs. More than 20 activists turned out in the light rain to carry signs, petition and hand out nearly 4,000 copies of our new newsletter, *No Sweatshops Bucco!*

The anti-sweatshop home opener was also the first time that we exercised our civil rights successfully in the space around the stadium, after reaching a consent agreement between the IWW, the city and the Pirates the day before in federal court. The First Amendment protects nearly all of the space for political activity, with the exception of "little bubbles" around the gates and ticket offices. Readers of the *IW* will recall that four anti-sweatshop activists were arrested March 2 for leafleting. The Federal Court case and the support of Pittsburgh's ACLU team brought huge press coverage to the issue.

The demands of No Sweatshop Bucco! are solid, winnable, and will make a difference to sweatshop workers struggling to organize. The experience of colleges and universities who are already using contractual licensing agreements with apparel manufacturers to enforce basic standards of human dignity and initiate monitoring efforts sets the stage for going after the largest licenser of copyrighted logos in the world, Major League Baseball. Cheers to Carnegie Mellon's People for Workers' Rights, who wrapped up a two-year campaign for their university to join the Workers' Rights Consortium April 12. Implementation away!

While Major League Baseball owns all of the team logos and controls the licensing agreements, the baseball fans' power is with the teams. It is the teams that have fan loyalty, and it is the teams who owe our communities for the stadiums we built them. The Pirates have clammed up at the direction of the MLB bosses, refusing to accept our petition with nearly 1,000 signatures or to comment on their use of sweatshops to reproduce the Pirate logo. They will stay clammed up until even more fans begin demanding Pirate sweatshop accountability. We plan a third march on the Pirates office and their merchandising director, another leafleting with the current issue of *No Sweatshops Bucco* at another game this month, with more newsletters and stadium actions to follow.

This campaign will not be won in Pittsburgh alone. We are appealing to anti-sweatshop baseball fans in other parts of the country to step up to bat behind Major League sweatshop accountability. Stadium space is the best space for anti-sweatshop education and we can coordinate research, demands and actions. Go to the stadium, talk about sweatshops, tour the gear shops; you'll feel the power too.

Labor crisis in the European Union...

continued from page 1

not the only argument for creating jobs."

There seems to be some support for such a position, especially in France, which is heading towards a general election. But according to the March 11 *Financial Times* (the UK's equivalent of the *Wall Street Journal*): "There is a stronger intellectual consensus than before that the best route out of poverty is a job and that disincentives to work must be removed."

What the *Financial Times* means to say is that employers want to be able to discipline and manipulate workers according to their own needs.

Are the unions fighting back?

So who's fighting the bad guys? The neo-liberals? On March 24th, at least 2 million working people marched in Rome to protest proposed 'reforms' of Italian labor laws. The proposals, put forward by the Berlusconi government, would repeal Article 18 of Italy's Workers' Statute, a cornerstone of Italian labor law. In the business press, the protests were presented as a fight over employers' ability to fire workers, unemployment compensation and pension reform.

Like the EU bureaucrat cited earlier, many Italians point out their economy is one of the healthiest in Europe. So why the restructuring?

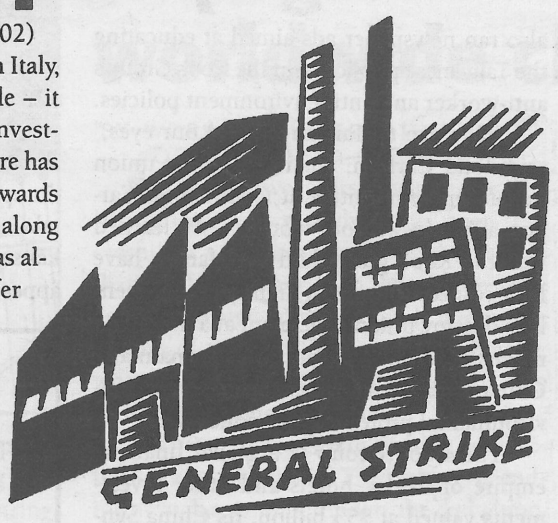
Class War or Trade War?

In March, U.S. President Bush surprised much of the world by placing tariffs upon European steel and Canadian timber. Bush was quoted as saying, "The EU shouldn't export its unemployment into the U.S." But is this what is happening? The EU has spent a great deal of efforts to modernize and restructure its steel industry. It operates with a minimum of workers, just like a good neo-liberal industry should. Besides there are many U.S. industries, including strategic ones, which have been allowed to move 'overseas.'

So why the tariffs?

The EU is behind the U.S. in many indicators of a healthy business investment environment. This means the EU lacks the statistics that encourage finance banks to invest in businesses there. The "EU is a long way from catching up with the U.S. The Commission noted before the summit that EU GDP per head has been stuck at 64 percent of the U.S. level for the past two years." (*FT*) In 2001 EU productivity was only 74% of the U.S. (*London Guardian*, 3/16/2002)

The reason for the restructuring in Italy, as well as the rest of the EU, is simple – it will allow higher profits and greater investments. Since at least the late 1980s, there has been a dramatic flow of world capital towards the U.S. This movement has developed along with information technology which has allowed faster and more efficient transfer of capital on a globally. The U.S., because of its infrastructure and successful attacks upon working-class living standards provides a greater return on investments than most other economies. So the rich throughout the world invest in the U.S. This made for a robust U.S. economy in the 1990s, but starved everyone else. For example, Japan, the world's second largest economy, has been in a decade long stagnation very similar to the U.S. Great Depression of the 1930s.



Because the U.S. has sucked up all the investment capital it has vastly inflated economic 'indicators.' For example, EU per-capita income is only 65 percent of the U.S. But this fails to account for the vast inequality of income in the US. In 1999, 90% of individual income growth went to the top 1% of the population. The U.S.'s wealth has become primarily speculative. Things are valuable because people expect to make money from investing in them. In 1999, Amazon.com, a company that had never turned a profit, was "worth" more than all the bookstores in the U.S. combined. On the day after its initial stock offering, Priceline.com, which offers cheap airline tickets, was worth more than any airline in the U.S.

The reason for the tariffs is to aid in finance capitals' attack upon the workers of Europe. What is happening is the tariffs give the neo-liberal wing of the EU more ammo to push for 'flexibility'/lower labor costs. They now have further proof of the need for higher productivity, etc. Even though it's not true, they have more ability to sell it to the European public.

Goodbye imperialism! Hello Global Piracy?

The EU is the first true supra-nation. This could only occur when capital has internationalized to a degree there is a de facto end to classic imperialism. Trade areas like the EU and NAFTA are more efficient administrations of global investments than nation states. As finance has internationalized, it has become less interested in protecting national interests and more interested in creating a uniform social policy. Thus we see the neo-liberal model being promoted throughout the world.

We seem to be heading into an era of global corporate piracy. Because investment capital has flowed into the U.S., illegal areas of super-profits, e.g. drugs, have become necessary to keep economies afloat. Because they have access to readily available capital, the mobs formed around such activities, like the privateers of old, are becoming integrated into the international ruling class. An example which has just surfaced is U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney; his Halliburton Oil Company's dealings with Saddam Hussein was financed through companies tied in with the Russian mafia.

Need for the OBU model

So where does that leave us, the working people of the world? It's quite obvious that the world's rulers are uniting to make us work harder for less. Where do we turn?

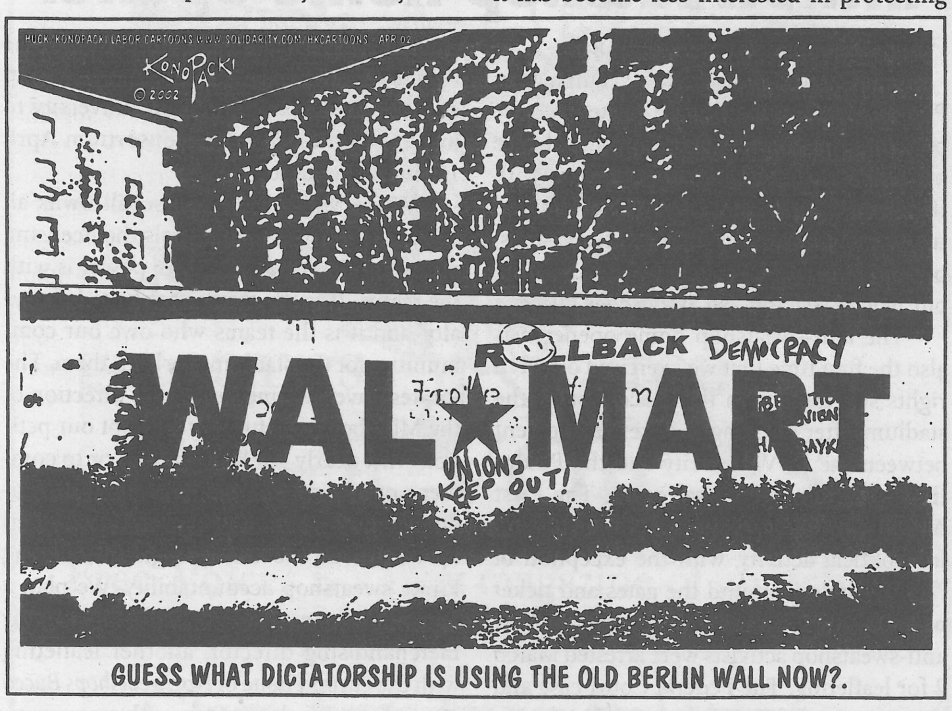
The anti-globalization protests have slowed down the rate of internationalization, but not its effects. The powers-that-be seem to be taking the protests as a lesson in public relations rather than as a serious movement. Those who do take the anti-globalization movements seriously, for example Bill Clinton, are doing so to integrate certain interest groups, primarily the official union bureaucracies.

In Italy, unions close to the IWW led the fights against the revisions to 'Article 18.' On February 15, a month before the official trade union march in Rome, democratic rank-and-file unions such as COBAS, UNICOBAS, CUB and USI called a national general strike. This was because the official unions had chickened out. The strike was extremely successful and over 150,000 people marched in Rome against the Berlusconi government as well as the war in Afghanistan.

The official unions responded with the larger rally in March. But there are ominous tidings. The head of the CSIL federation has said he is ready for further negotiations and speculation is the largest union federations are willing to trade 'flexibility' for better unemployment benefits/coverage for workers in smaller shops.

While fighting for unemployment benefits seems like a noble gesture, the Italian government doesn't have the money to fund such an action on the long term. Every government in the 'eurozone' (the area of the EU using the euro currency) is required to keep governmental deficits to 0.5% of Gross National Product. The Berlusconi government's deficit is hovering around 1.5%. So where will the money come from? It's simply not going to happen or worse, unemployment benefits will be traded for labor flexibility, and then the benefits cut.

While the actions of our fellow workers in the COBAS movement show how to combat neo-liberalism on a national level, we need something more. Simple federations and working groups of nationally based unions – even democratic ones – are not cutting it. The labor movement needs to become truly international in the same way capital has. As IWW Fred Thompson said 40 years ago, "World labor needs a world union."



GUESS WHAT DICTATORSHIP IS USING THE OLD BERLIN WALL NOW?.

News Item: Labor Board issues complaint against Wal-Mart

The National Labor Relations Board has charged Wal-Mart with more than 45 violations of U.S. labor law at a Sam's Club store in Las Vegas. The complaint cites Wal-Mart managers for:

Illegally threatening workers with termination if they support the union;

Illegally encouraging employees to retaliate against co-workers who supported the union;

Illegally interrogating workers about their union sympathies;

Illegally threatening not to hire applicants and to fire employees based on their support for the union;

Illegal surveillance of workers' activities to discover their union activities;

Illegally attempting to silence workers' voices to discuss the union on Wal-Mart property.

British workers losing ground

British workers put in long hours, pay high taxes but have a lower standard of living than workers in other European countries, according to a new study by the Centre for Economics and Business Research.

The Centre found that families in the UK have on average more disposable income, with £24,407 a year to spend. But because Britons work longer hours, have a higher cost of living and fewer holidays, people in the UK are actually worse off.

If a British family moved to Spain they would save up to 26% on their weekly shopping bill. In other European countries the cost of living is also much cheaper. According to the survey: 31% lower in Italy, 13% lower in France and 19% lower in Germany.

Workers in continental Europe also benefit from working fewer hours and getting more holidays. The average working day in the UK is 8.7 hours long; the average Italian works one hour less each day.

And outside the UK, workers get many more days of holiday. In the UK, the average number of vacation and holiday time off totals 28 days a year. But in France, workers get 47 days a year, in Germany 41, in Spain 46, and in Italy 44 days a year.

AFL officials caught in insurance scam

While AFL-CIO officials denounced "Enron Economics" enriching corporate executives at the expense of ordinary workers, leaders of several AFL unions made hundreds of thousands of dollars from insider-trading at union-owned Ullico Inc., formerly known as Union Labor Life Insurance Co.

A federal grand jury is probing a scheme under which members of Ullico's board were permitted to buy and sell shares, taking advantage of the insurer's policy of setting its share price once a year. Thus, when shares of telecom start-up Global Crossing (now bankrupt), in which Ullico had major holdings, skyrocketed, board members could buy in cheap; when the investments fell they could cash out at the prior year's price.

Ullico officers and board members cashed in some 71,000 shares of company stock from January 2000 to September 2001, clearing as much as $6.5 million in profits. Plumbers union President Martin Maddaloni turned a profit of $184,000 in 2000 by selling Ullico shares back to the insurer.

Other officials reaping windfall profits include Chairman Robert Georgine, former head of the AFL's building trades division; Communications Workers President Morton Bahr; William Bernard, former head of the Asbestos Workers union; Jacob West, former president of the Ironworkers; and Douglas McCarron, president of the Carpenters.

Global Crossing's swift demise weakened Ullico, which made an after-tax profit of $330 million when it sold part of its Global Crossing stake in 1999 and 2000. Its remaining holdings are now virtually worthless.

Since its founding 77 years ago, Ullico ensured labor-movement control of the company by making its stock available for purchase only to unions and officers and directors of the company. For years, Ullico kept its stock at the fixed price of $25 a share.

In 1997 Ullico began adjusting its share price annually. In December 1999, two weeks before the books closed for Ullico's annual audit, Georgine offered senior officers and directors the chance to buy as many as 4,000 additional Ullico shares each for $53.94. Soon after, the price was set at $146, nearly tripling the purchase price. As Global Crossing's stock plummeted, board members sold Ullico shares at $146, cashing in before the price was cut. Shares now trade at $74.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney has requested a formal review of Ullico stock trading. "Ullico must live up to the standards we ask others to meet," he wrote.

Organizing the knowledge factories

Balancing the budget on the backs of 'part-time' faculty

For decades college administrators have looked to faculty salaries to balance their budgets and pay for new initiatives. While generally avoiding laying off tenured faculty, administrators pioneered the use of low-paid temporary labor – hiring temporary "part-time" lecturers and graduate (and even undergraduate) teaching assistants to replace retiring professors and to serve new students. Known as freeway flyers, these temps often string together three to five part-time positions in different universities and colleges, speeding between campuses to meet their living expenses doing the work they love.

Nearly half of all faculty in the California State University system are temporary lecturers, a number that has grown over the past decade as more than 1,000 full-time professors retired and were replaced by "part-time" lecturers.

The CSU faculty union elected new union leadership three years ago to fight back. After years of stalemated negotiations, the union was preparing for a statewide strike when the administration blinked.

The new contract provides three-year contracts for lecturers with six years of service, and expanded benefits and job protections. The university also agreed to hire 20 percent more tenure track faculty each year. Higher quality of education will be the result and lecturers can take a car-exhaust break by settling into long-term, single-campus contractual positions with increasing permanent opportunities.

College faculty across North America are facing similar issues. History teacher Joe Berry teaches at three Chicago-area colleges, earning about $6,000 for four months' work.



"Here's your first paycheck.
Directions to the food stamp office are on the back."

Part-time faculty at Columbia College and Roosevelt University recently unionized, and organizing campaigns are underway at other campuses.

In New York City, part-time activists joined with other union activists to oust the entrenched leadership of the American Federation of Teachers local at the City University of New York. In Massachusetts, the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor is spearheading a campaign to end a system where part-time faculty in the state's community college system (represented by a NEA local dominated by full-timers, though they are a minority of the members) receive only a quarter of a vote in union elections. Not surprisingly, these "unionized" faculty – many of whom teach five or six courses a semester – receive no benefits, and are paid less than $2,500 a course to teach in one of the country's most expensive cities.

The Boston Coalition, which includes Education Workers Industrial Union 620 (IWW), helped to organize part-time faculty unions at Emerson College and the University of Massachusetts-Boston, and recently published a survey of conditions at 35 area colleges demonstrating that the overwhelming majority earn half or less of the average wages for starting full-time faculty at the same institutions, even though more than half of part-timers have taught at their schools for four years or longer.

Typically, salaries are so low that tuition from one or two students is enough to cover the entire salary of the part-timer teaching the class. (A copy of the report is available from the IWW on request.)



Bosses look after themselves

While more than a million U.S. workers were laid off last year, wages stagnated, and hundreds of thousands saw their pension plans decimated, median CEO pay soared by 7 percent – and would have been higher had it not been for the weak stock market which held down the value of stock options.

Coca-Cola cut 5,200 of the company's 29,000 jobs, for example, and paid CEO Douglas Daft $105 million (including stock and bonuses). The value of Coke workers' 401k plans has been slashed in half as a result of Coke's falling stock price.

Just days before Polaroid declared bankruptcy it stopped paying laid-off workers' severance payments, and retirees' health care. They then asked the court for $19 million in retention bonuses for themselves (the court said no, managers are now seeking $4.5 million). CEO G.T. DiCamillo pulled in $9.4 million as he guided the company into bankruptcy.

Bankruptcy can devastate workers (22,000 jobs will be lost through planned store closings), but it's not too bad for the bosses. At Kmart, former CEO Charles Conaway made $29 million last year, and then was offered a $6.5 million "retention" bonus after the company went bust. He quit a few weeks later, but Kmart has asked the court to pay him $2 million any way. Conaway worked for Kmart for less than two years.

source: AFL-CIO Pay Watch

Aviation Security Act targets immigrants

BY CARL SCHMITZ

Late last year, Congress passed the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, which includes a citizenship requirement for airport screeners that goes into effect in November. Nationwide, approximately 7,000 people will be out of work. In California's Bay Area alone 1,000 screeners will lose their jobs.

The act also makes airport screeners federal employees but denies them the right to organize and whistleblower protections. This comes as the SEIU has begun to make inroads, organizing 2,000 of the U.S.'s estimated 28,000 screeners and boosting wages to $13 an hour. Workers who spent years working their way up from substandard wages will not be around to reap the benefits. No such standards were put in place for airline pilots, baggage handlers, flight attendants, and many other airport-centered professions which are typically unionized.

Around 950 of the 1,250 screeners in the Bay Area are Filipino immigrants, mostly noncitizen legal residents. The citizenship requirement is particularly tricky because of immigration laws which make it much easier for a Filipino permanent resident to have family members join them in this country

Unions win ruling on fees

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has unanimously ruled that unions may charge nonmembers they represent for the costs of organizing competing firms. The decision does not affect workers in the 22 states with so-called "right to work" (for less) laws, where workers cannot be made to pay union dues or representation fees even if there is a collective bargaining agreement.

NYU adjuncts organize

In April, adjunct and other nontenured faculty at New York University, one of the country's largest private universities, filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board requesting union representation. The faculty members are members of Adjuncts Come Together-UAW (ACT-UAW).

Upon certification by the NLRB, ACT-UAW will become the largest non-tenure track only union at any institution of higher education in the United States.

The UAW already represents NYU graduate teaching assistants, having successfully challenged decades of anti-worker labor law in gaining their right to unionize.

Adjuncts and part-time instructors teach throughout NYU and comprise more than 70 percent of the approximately 5,600-member faculty. Adjuncts often teach heavier course loads than their full-time tenured colleagues and do not receive basic benefits such as health insurance and pension. The average pay for NYU adjuncts ranges from $2,000 to $3,000 per 15-week course.

Camosun College boosts Admin. pay, slashes staff

Victoria, B.C., based Camosun College has awarded administrators pay raises of up to 20 percent, at the same time that 36 unionized workers and 19 faculty are being laid off to cover budget deficits stemming from a failed entrepreneurial "Idea Centre" and anticipated cuts in provincial funding.

Teachers demand a say

School administrators are fighting a proposal by California's largest teachers union to allow unions to negotiate over curriculum and textbook selection. The legislation would leave the final decisions to administrators, but would allow teachers to negotiate for a say in reaching those decisions.

"Administrators have made these decisions unilaterally forever. Teachers now want a say in this," says Wayne Johnson, president of the California Teachers Association.

U. of Illinois sit-in wins union rights

Following an occupation of the Swanlund Administration Building, the University of Illinois agreed March 13 to begin negotiations with the Graduate Employees Organization on defining an appropriate bargaining unit and to allow the school's 5,500 graduate employees to move toward a union representation election.

GEO members entered the building at about 7:30 a.m., offering chocolates to the few employees already there. "We put the civil in civil disobedience," GEO Communications Officer Dave Kamper said.

GEO has fought to improve the conditions of graduate assistants since the early 1990s, when it began a successful campaign to raise minimum stipends and win other improvements. More recently administrators have refused to discuss working conditions until GEO was certified as graduate employees' bargaining agent, and had refused to allow a representation election. The Illinois Education Labor Board had previously ruled that graduate employees had the legal right under state law to organize, but did not resolve the question of how the bargaining unit would be defined.

The occupation was the latest in a series of actions which included a two-day strike last November and the threat of renewed strike action as Spring finals approached.

Graduate employee unions are making gains across the country, in both public and private institutions.

After years of struggling for recognition, graduate teaching and research assistants at Temple University in Philadelphia reached a contract settlement April 10 which provides substantial pay increases and full coverage of individual health care premiums.

This is the first graduate employee union contract in Pennsylvania.

In Boston, teaching assistants at Tufts University won an NLRB decision April 1 allowing them to proceed to a union representation election. Tufts had fought the union, arguing that the teaching assistants who teach a growing share of its classes are not employees. The UAW notes that pay rates vary dramatically across the campus, but that many make no more than $9,000 a year.

The UAW also recently won a union election at Columbia University in New York, while University of Vermont TAs signed on with the American Federation of Teachers.

Meanwhile, at the University of Michigan, one of the country's longest-established TA unions reached a new three-year contract March 17. The Graduate Employees Organization (AFT) will allow graduate employees who hold less than quarter-time appointments to receive subsidized health benefits, and commits the administration to establishing child care facilities for teachers' children.

"There are two things in particular that we have been fighting for since this union started, and that is affirmative action in GSI hiring and child care," GEO President Cedric de Leon said. "We've literally been fighting for these things for 25 years, and we finally got them. That is amazing."

GEO members say it was only the threat of an impending strike that forced the University to settle.

Even undergraduate employees have begun to organize. At the University of Massachusetts Amherst, 360 resident assistants (who work 20 hours a week for room and board and $50 a week) voted nearly 2-to-1 March 5 to join the UAW local that also represents graduate employees on the campus.

The resident assistants live in the UMass dorms and help police the behavior of other students in exchange for a weekly stipend. After a long campaign, RAs won the right to unionize this year from the Massachusetts Labor Relations Commission. However, the university has refused to open negotiations and said the union would have to take them to court to enforce state labor law.



One does not like to listen to the news broadcasts anymore, what with all the unpleasant things going on in our world. Wars going on all over the globe. Armies killing each other and laying waste to each other's land while the politicians and their money-men string-pullers remain fat and sassy. Jews and Arabs killing each other while there is so much room in these lands that have room for everyone who together could develop the land they live on instead of sqaubbling over the oil that lies beneath. Not only do they have a common spiritual heritage, but they are both ancient civilizations whose values could be imparted to the rest of the world.

As our late historian Fred Thompson was fond of pointing out, such is a classic example of the obsolescence of the institution of the nation state. Wars are going on all over this poor planet of ours because of our dogged insistence on perpetuating such outmoded institutions.

If the news broadcasts in themselves give little hope for good cheer, the weather reports are being presented with a tone of impending disaster. If one does not utilize the proper brand of toothpaste, hair tonic, patronize the right fast food chain or drive the proper gas-guzzler, one is in for a lousy sex life.

Overall, those who manipulate us endeavor to instill us with a feeling of fear. But rulers have used the fear factor since time immemorial to control their subjects.

While whips and pillories are not so much in use anymore, a more sophisticated means of control has been devised, and that is consumerism. Keeping us broke is a sure way of keeping us under their thumb.

So many times I have heard someone say today's wages would be all right if one could have yesterday's prices. Such is the way under the present economic system, where you keep paying more and more for less and less.

May Day s the day when we must remind ourselves of the great strides that have been made by organized groups of working men and women through their struggles in the past, and to dedicate ourselves to continuing that struggle in the future – despite the turning back of history on the part of our manipulators. Human progress, as always, comes from the bottom up, never the other way around!

— C.C. Redcloud



MAY DAY greetings from

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Anti-globalization and worldwide class struggle

BY WORK-SHY INTERNATIONALISTS OF EHRENFELD, GERMANY

In the last two years since Seattle, the left, in Europe as elsewhere, has been successful in a few noteworthy mobilizations that would not have been thought possible before. The high point was surely forcing the closure of the IMF/WB Summit in Prague, where 11,000 cops didn't get there to stop us from attacking the summit.

However at the end of the day, such actions are just symbolic. The premature ending of such a summit hinders the daily functioning of capitalism, but not the capital valorisation process.

A movement that really wants to challenge the capitalist system has to leave the symbolic plane, and attack capitalist relations in the everyday life of exploitation and need.

It is clear that this can't be done on a big scale with what is understood as the 'anti-globalisation movement.' Up until now, after the militant anti-globalization demos, we return obediently to our everyday lives where we work and pay for everything. A movement can, however, begin to attack the foundations of power if it places precisely this everyday exploitation in question – i.e., if we, as the working class who reproduce this system daily, get into movement.

Where we keep the machines running through our daily work, we could also bring them to a standstill. That only has the prospect of long-term success if such struggles take place on an international level, relating to each other.

This perspective can often appear to us in Germany to be very unrealistic, because with us the ruling class seems so firmly in the saddle... So it may not be noticed that capitalism is in a global crisis that compels the world working class to fight. ...

For example, in Argentina: The land known as the model land of neo-liberalism complies with the conditions of the IMF with brutal austerity measures. For years there have been uprisings and factory occupations in different parts of the country. A movement of the unemployed began to organize and block major roads with burning barricades. There was little focus until the rage exploded 19 and 20 December in a common people's uprising which overturned the government. In the next two weeks, five presidents took the role and immediately resigned in fast succession. The old apparatus of parties and unions had nothing to say. People organized themselves, in the streets, in workplaces, in groups in their neighborhoods.

For example, in Paris: At the end of October, the longest strike in a fast food company began in a McDonalds branch in Paris, ending after 115 days with success. The sacked people who were the trigger point for the strike came back to work; on top of that they got back-pay for when they were on strike. Negotiations over wage increases for the 800 McDonalds branches in France are underway. There were demonstrations every Saturday in front of McDonalds branches. Other fast-food outlets in France have also got to striking point, and employees have started to organize themselves across different companies. McDonalds will no longer be the exhausted symbol of the 'American way of life,' but seen as exploiter and the sharp end of the casualisation of work relations.

For example, Brighton: After privatization of the bin men, workers refused to implement increased work standards. They were sacked and occupied the factory in June 2001. Together with supporters they prevented trucks with scabs from driving out through the picket lines. A successful action: the contract with the private firm was terminated, the sacked workers were taken on again, wages for the time of the occupation paid, and pre-privatization work standards re-introduced.

For example, Cologne: in front of an office block, in November, twenty Turkish men and women danced in the rain to the rhythm of drums and flutes. "An end to the exploitation" read the banners. The target of the

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Court hits immigrant workers' rights...

continued from page 1

few worker protection laws to the financial welfare of the employer and to a law designed to prohibit workers' movements, even as NAFTA, the WTO and related schemes increase the mobility of money, goods and services. Immigration law quotas set aside thousands of positions for the wealthy in the guise of investors and traders, but specifically exclude other skilled and unskilled workers, who are prevented from following the jobs.

Until very recently, even the AFL-CIO opposed immigrant workers on the grounds that they undercut wages and conditions and take jobs. The AFL has officially changed its position and some of its member unions are now organizing the undocumented rather than simply calling the cops as they had done just a few years ago.

This court position demonstrates clearly that workers cannot ultimately rely on the meager protections of U.S. labor law. The National Employment Law Project points out that this decision does not change many protections. Undocumented workers are still entitled to organize a union to improve wages and working conditions. Undocumented workers are still protected from employment discrimination. They are covered under the federal minimum wage and overtime law and a whole host of state wage and hour laws. Undocumented workers are still entitled to recover every penny of wages that unscrupulous employers have underpaid them, and state and federal agencies must still enforce those rights. In nearly every state, undocumented workers who are injured on the job are entitled to the protections of state workers' compensation laws. Undocumented workers are entitled to lost wages as part of a tort recovery, and to damages generally for personal injuries and for wrongful death.

Justice Breyer in his dissenting opinion questions the future of these rights. "The [immigration] statute's language itself does not explicitly state how a violation is to effect the enforcement of other laws, such as the labor laws. What is to happen, for example, when an employer hires, or an alien works, in violation of these provisions? Must the alien forfeit all pay earned? May the employer ignore the labor laws? More to the point, may the employer violate those laws with impunity, at least once – secure in the knowledge that the Board cannot assess a monetary penalty? The immigration statute's language simply does not say."

Regardless of what the law says, so long as the U.S. is in a superior economic position, workers will go there for jobs. This ruling by the Supreme Court will not end that: it simply makes it easier for employers to exploit undocumented workers. But it also should clarify for all to see that government cannot be relied upon as an ally of the working class. Labor protection laws are nearly impossible to have enforced in some jurisdictions, even for citizens. Although the law can occasionally be used, ultimately the only force that can prevent exploitation is the workers themselves in union.

Ironically, the highest court in the center of capitalism has demonstrated that the IWW is correct in holding that the working class has no choice but to organize as a class, not only to achieve the ultimate goal of economic democracy, but even to achieve the minimal rights written in the constitution.

Reflections from the Ontario Tory convention

BY JEFF SHANTZ

On October 16, the very day the Ontario Common Front's campaign against Ontario's ruling neoliberal Tory government kicked off, the party's leader and provincial premier announced he was resigning. Thus began the party's campaign to replace him, as all of the Tory scum sought to rise to the top.

With one candidate promising to illegalize teacher strikes and homelessness, and others promising to introduce multi-tiered health care, the brutality of Tory policy was on full display. The coronation was set for March 21-23 as a few thousand Tories descended on Toronto to elect former Finance Minister, and architect of the Tory assault, Ernie Eves as premier.

On Friday, March 22, several hundred people gathered in Moss Park in Toronto's east end for the first in a weekend of actions called by the Ontario Common Front aimed at disrupting the convention while drawing attention to the fatal impacts of Tory rule.

Taking their cue from comrades in Argentina who filled the streets with the clamour of banging pots and pans, people noisily snake-marched to the abandoned Mission Press building. The Press is one of hundreds of habitable buildings in Toronto that sit empty while people are forced to sleep and die on the streets. This is one of the foul situations which contributes to near-zero vacancy rates and helps to keep rents in Toronto the highest in Canada.

People took it upon themselves to provide the housing which the government denies. The doors were pried open and almost 60 people made it into the building, hanging banners calling for affordable housing, now. After a couple of hours, riot cops had cordoned off the entire block surrounding the building. Streets were closed and streetcar traffic was stopped on Dundas, one of the city's major routes.

Riot cops pounded the building with tear gas in order to choke people out. As folks left the building they were grabbed by cops, arrested and, after long waits on the freezing asphalt, thrown into police wagons. Most have been charged with mischief under $5,000, though the Crown has contemplated harsher charges like break and enter for some of the arrestees.

Despite the arrests, it is reasonable to claim the squat as a success. It maintained the Common Front's commitment to creative direct action while ensuring that the Tory convention did not pass without incident. The action emphasized the bankruptcy of Tory policies while forcing the government to once again show its utter dependence on repressive force, one of the key features of seven years of Conservative rule.

The only way any sort of credible resistance movement is going to be forged in Ontario is through a redoubling of efforts to make connections between grassroots community groups and rank-and-file workers...

Of course things might have gone much differently had there been a large labour presence outside the squat to keep the cops somewhat at bay. Such a scenario is far from the reality of the present situation in Ontario.

OFL: Pronounced "Awful"

While Friday's squat could be claimed as a success, the same could not be said for the actions the next day. The OCF organized a noisy march on the Convention Centre to coincide with the actual election of the new leader. The Ontario Federation of Labour held a separate "action," a seven-minute silent vigil to mark seven years of Tory rule. It was an appropriate gesture since it also marked seven years of mainstream labour silence in the face of vicious Tory attacks. Not content with resting on such laurels, the OFL decided to put on yet another pathetic display of how utterly complete its surrender to the Tories has become.

Even though the OCF had worked to get the OFL to agree, at its annual convention, to organize an action, the OFL opted not to participate in a joint demonstration.

Despite knowing the OCF's plans weeks in advance the OFL decided to rally at the same time but in a different location. As the Common Front march approached the park where the OFL was gathered, police intervened to block their progress. When a few people tried to report the cop violence against the march, they were denied access to the microphone by marshals. With the OCF march struggling to move past cop lines and calling out to labour with chants of "Solidarity" behind the banner "An Injury to One is An Injury to All," the OFL scurried to collect their gear and scramble away.

The OFL's actions were a complete embarrassment. Their refusal to join in a solidarity march, even after the OCF march was attacked by cops, and their complicity with police to ensure the two marches never joined, confirm that OFL bureaucrats should no longer be considered part of the opposition to neoliberalism in Ontario. Of course, its failure to fight even direct assaults on workers such as the return of the 60-hour workweek, restrictions on union drives and limits on work refusals over health and safety concerns should have made this clear long ago. No confusion should remain: the OFL has clearly made peace with the Tories and is content simply to reaffirm its position as the brokers of labour, regardless of which government is in power.

Considering that current OFL President Wayne Samuelson is the same president whose executive killed plans for a general strike five years ago, against the vote of OFL members, this is a conclusion that came a little late to some anti-capitalists.

The unprincipled actions of the OFL should finally convince grassroots activists to turn away from the labour bureaucrats and towards developing real connections with rank-and-file workers, the same workers who have been so disgusted by the events of March 23. This means meeting with workers and having serious discussions about what sort of assistance we in anti-capitalist movements can offer in their struggles against conservative leadership, policies and structures in their own unions.

Too often the measure of labour involvement in coalitions has been the amount of money given, the forcefulness of rhetoric from high-profile leaders, or the winning of a motion at this or that convention. Enough of that. The only way that any sort of credible resistance movement is going to be

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Edmonton Tory convention protest

BY EUGENE PLAWIUK

The Edmonton IWW's demonstration at the Alberta Tory Convention March 22 was a success despite the absence of the official labour movement.

The actions began with a group of student activists at Victoria High School walking out and protesting in front of the Legislature in support of teachers who had been forced back to work. At the Tory convention delegates, ministers and MLAs were welcomed with a gauntlet of 75 protestors chanting "Tories must go!"

The next day an IWW member was assaulted by Shaw Convention Centre security while a handful of labour officials were leafleting the delegates. FW Gordie Thomas and others were ordered to leave the property. When he declined, a bully boy security guard decided to physically assault FW Thomas. In the ensuing scuffle, he was tossed to the ground and two Tory Delegates joined the security guard in the assault. Security then conceded that we had a right to leaflet at the entrance.

While the protest was called on short notice, it shows that the IWW can call a protest that is more effective than "official" labour. Labour relies on its paid staff to attend events and fails to mobilize its membership. On the other hand the IWW is at every strike or mobilization, though we do not get the same support in our struggles. The lack of labour March 22 was the same as at last summer's picket at Stats Canada where "official labour" failed to come out and join us on our pickets.

When students can organize themselves to walk out and protest, even if it is a small number, what does that say about labour's ineffectiveness? Where is the building of a rank-and-file movement of activists? That is the task I believe our fellow workers and comrades in their unions need to address.

Policing dissent: Notes from Toronto

BY BRIAN BURCH

Perhaps what distinguishes the participants in the OCF efforts from other opponents to Harris is the basic focus of demands that are social justice at its most basic – housing for the homeless, food for the hungry, respect for the marginalised, an adequate living for all. Thirty years ago advocating such ideals was fairly mainstream. Now you face arrest, police clubs and the threat of plastic bullets if you raise such concerns in public.

For much of the afternoon I wandered through downtown Toronto with people from a wide range of countries, cultures and backgrounds. At Allan Gardens we may have been 300 people but by the time we arrived at the Convention Centre, we had easily doubled in size.

Police vans lined the streets well in advance of the gathering. Police on horseback and bicycles, riot cops with shields, even occasional officers with guns for tear gas or rubber bullets, made it clear that dissent is not desirable.

But despite massive provocation by the police, a radical but calm spirit prevailed. At Allan Gardens there was music, a few speeches and a lot of touching base with old acquaintances and meeting new faces. Leaving the park was difficult – the police at first refused to let people leave the park, clubbing people, throwing others to the ground, pushing, throwing bicycles at protesters... We were finally allowed out of the park and went south along Jarvis, herded onto the sidewalk by police who occupied the entire street.

Just north of Adelaide a piper joined the event. It was a strange addition to the drums, pots and pans and other noisemakers participants had brought with them.

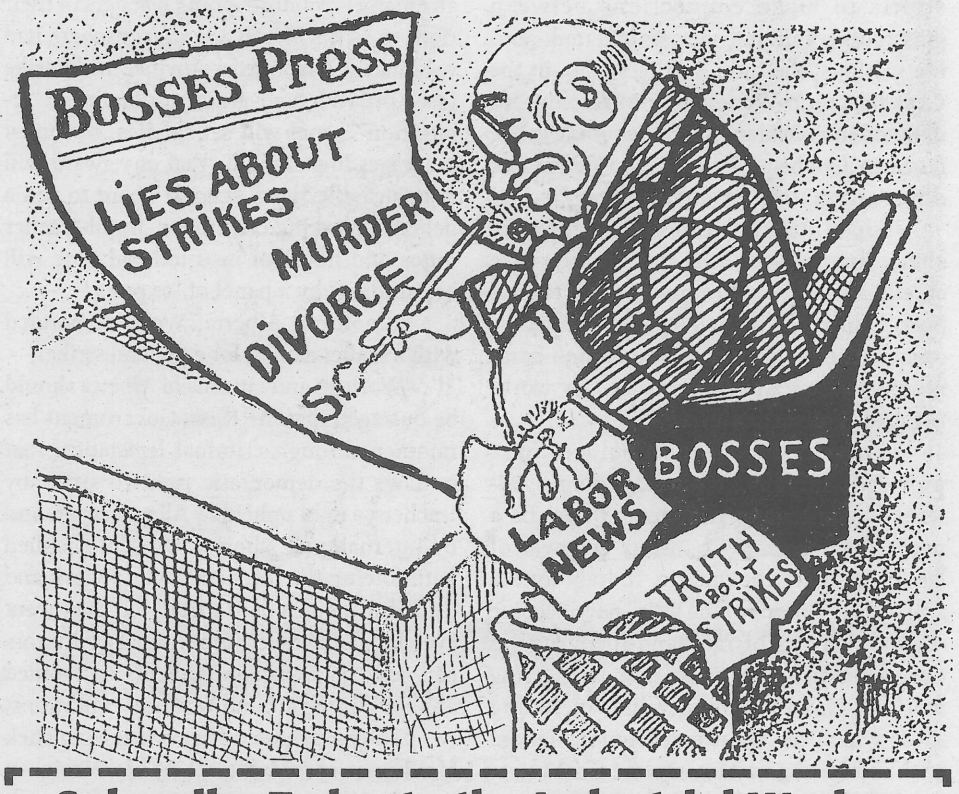
At Front and Jarvis the protest turned west, continuing along the sidewalk. When the protest got to Wellington it become quite ugly – the police blocked all the streets and rode their horses onto the sidewalk to prevent the march from going anywhere. At least one person was clubbed to the ground and several sustained bruises and other injuries as the police shoved the crowd back. Eventually the police tired of this and permitted us to continue.

Except for threats of arrest for walking on the street, the rest of the event seemed relatively free of police harassment. This might be explained by the presence of union members on the sidewalk on the south side of Wellington. The riot police – those on horseback, on bicycles, driving the wagons and so forth – were surrounded and outnumbered by protesters.

Bank and other corporate offices were guarded by riot police, likely afraid that protesters may have made a link between corporate greed and the Tory agenda. But those pulling private security duty had a dull day.

I was surprised to find, at Bay and Wellington, a small group of Toronto IWW members with a banner. The Wobs are turning up everywhere again.

On the whole I was impressed with those involved with this OCF effort. It was focused, exciting, hopeful, on our part defiantly peaceful, but clearly seen as a threat by the powers that be. In participating in this snake march called by the Ontario Common Front, groups from Earthroots to OCAP to CUPE found clear and common ground in the centre of corporate Canada.



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A May Day challenge for the IWW



This May First I send greetings to all Wobblies and supporters of revolutionary unionism. I wish you the best in your lives and in your struggles. But I also have a challenge for the IWW and its supporters.

For many years, the labor movement in the industrialized world has been taking it on the jaw. Unions have accepted the role of junior partner in the triumvirate of business, government and labor. They have forgotten that the labor movement did not win the victories in the past through accommodation with capital. Our victories were rooted in a vision of democracy that would extend far beyond the tainted political elections western workers have, to equality in industry and in the economy. We shared a goal of a classless society, where workers controlled the workplace; residents ran their neighborhoods; and there was no place left for capitalists and landlords.

The point is not to die for your class, it's to get the other (expletive deleted) to die for his class. We don't need more martyrs – we need to win...

Today much of the labor movement is in dire need of glasses as their vision is obscured by electoral politics dominated by capitalist parties. Those afflicted generally accept the role of the union leader as the undisputed voice of the membership. There is little place for the members, other than to make noise when ordered to and just as readily to return to their daily tasks.

Our union, the IWW, has admirably maintained the vision of the early unionists. We still hold fast to our opposition to capital and to the goal of economic democracy. We still hold our leaders on a tight leash and leave major decision making in the hands of the membership. In spite of our ideals though, we face two major challenges. The first is ideology and the second is self-discipline. For decades, ideology has blinded many Wobblies to the necessities of practical workplace organizing. I'll give two examples. In the United States, we lost two of our most successful industrial unions because of theoretical rigidity on the part of the leadership of the organization. For well over ten years, the IWW controlled the docks of Philadelphia until internal sectarian battles forced them out and they joined the more conservative ILA in 1926. Likewise, the metal and machinery workers in Cleveland had chalked up one victory after another in organizing and contract battles when ideological differences forced them to leave the IWW in order to hold onto the roughly 3,000 members they had in 1950, and we lost our last big job shops.

Both of these losses were due to a desire to hold fast to purity of revolutionary ideals. This may be an admirable goal, but any one who actually organizes will quickly discover that in the real world you have to reach out to workers where they are now, not where you wish they were. That doesn't mean you give up or compromise your goals – it is the ideology of the IWW that has kept it alive and relevant – but unless you can successfully use our ideals to win bread and butter issues, most workers will understandably not listen to pie in the sky rants. We need to ground ourselves and win actual victories on the shop floor before workers or other labor unionists will take us seriously.

The second challenge is that of self-discipline. For many years, the social movements in general and the labor movement in particular have been taking hit after hit. We have become so used to losing that a whole generation of activists have grown up thinking that if we just keep martyring ourselves, keep achieving the moral high ground, we will somehow win. But to misquote U.S. General George Patton, the point is not to die for your class, it's to get the other (expletive deleted) to die for his class. In other words, we don't need more martyrs – we need to win. But in order to win, we have to take ourselves seriously. We have to not only believe we can win, we have to fully understand what is at stake.

This isn't a game: people's lives, their families, their homes are on the line. Our freedom is at stake, even more so now in the aftermath of September 11. We are working more and being paid less every year. We are losing the token political democracy that we won in the past. If we are going to turn the tide, we must come to agreement on how we are going to win. No one organization has the capability to fight capital on all fronts simultaneously. The class war is a war and we need to choose our battles strategically. We need to pick fights that we can win, or that at least will advance our position.

Our current "strategy" for campaigns is to wait for people to come to us, which often results in our joining battles that have already been lost. We need a planned strategy and it must be rooted in industrial unionism. This will require members to take on a higher level of responsibility. There is an old saying that with power comes responsibility. In our union, the members have the power, and therefore are responsible for its success or its failure. We are not a generic activist organization: we are a union and we need to act like one.

Our members in Portland, Oregon, have taken this seriously... Certainly they have made errors in Portland, but they are learning from those mistakes, which is why they are the largest and most active branch in the union. Most of their new members have come from workplace organizing, not recruiting from the activist scene. Many of their drives were not won, but they have held onto members who are now analyzing why they lost and what they need to win next time.

So my May Day challenge is for everyone to take a serious look at their activity for the union and make a renewed commitment to the IWW. Take inspiration from the dedication in Portland. Analyze past actions in specific terms of the successes and failures of local strategies at organizing. Create a plan to build on the victories and not repeat mistakes. Increase the local level of work dedicated to organizing workers for the IWW. Finally, write up the results of your work to help other members of the union to avoid your errors and to repeat your victories.

Yours in Solidarity,
Joshua Freeze, GEB Chair

Editor's Note: *I must dissent from FW Freeze's characterization of the Cleveland situation, which involved far fewer members (less than 1,000) than he suggests. This dispute involved a serious question: whether the U.S. government had the right to determine whom IWW members could elect as union officers and if it could compel those officers to sign affidavits attesting to their political views.*

Several unions originally stood with the IWW in refusing to sign Taft-Hartley affidavits, until unions such as the Steelworkers began raiding unions barred from participation in NLRB elections because of their principled stand. It is hard to see how any genuine labor organization could have taken a position different from that adopted by the IWW membership in this instance.

U.S. trying seaman on mutiny charges

Shi Lei, a 21-year-old cook from China, is awaiting trial in federal court in Honolulu on charges of murder and mutiny. Shi allegedly stabbed to death the captain and first mate aboard the Taiwanese-owned fishing vessel Full Means 2 March 14 during an argument in which he pleaded to return home.

Tens of thousands of seafarers work in slave-like conditions. They put in long hours for little or no pay, live on meager diets, and endure regular beatings and other abuse. Many disappear if they complain.

On the Full Means 2, seamen were routinely beaten for minor infractions, denied communication with family members, received no direct payment on board, and were forbidden from leaving the ship. On the day of the killings, the captain allegedly punched Shi in the face several times when he asked to call his mother and return home to China.

Shi had been enticed with a three-year contract with a promise of wages of $130 to $170 a month; once at sea he learned $2,000 would be deducted from his wages for the job shark who recruited him.

There have been a number of recent Pacific mutinies by poor, rural Chinese ship workers against officers aboard Taiwanese-owned and -operated fishing vessels. But this is the first to reach U.S. courts.

Fighting the Tories

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forged in Ontario is through a redoubling of efforts to make connections between grassroots community groups and rank-and-file workers, the same workers who, in the Canadian Auto Workers, for example, condemned their leadership for not going to the fence in Quebec City and who demanded direct action training after Quebec.

Indeed direct action workshops are something we can and should offer. We should also be ready to provide picket support, help build flying squads and involve ourselves in the creation of joint union-community anti-racism and anti-poverty working groups.

These rank-and-file committees have provided great impetus to the promising alternative unions in Europe and may be a necessary component in any renewal of labour militancy in Ontario. In Italy, for example, the "unions of the base" have become important parts of rank-and-file struggles over a broad spectrum of issues affecting working-class community life, including those which the mainstream unions ignore such as housing and unemployment.

The OCF already includes many union militants. These OCF union activists should initiate the rank-and-file committees or working groups which can begin the process. There is a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done, compounded by the past reliance on bureaucrats, but it must be done if emergent movements like the OCF are to develop a real social power, one which is potentially transformative, rather than being a loud voice of dissent.

Alberta IWW: This is class war

The Alberta government shoved through an emergency bill stripping teachers of their right to strike March 13, after teachers had voluntarily suspended a province-wide strike (see April *IW*). A government-dominated "arbitration" panel will set salaries, but must set wages low enough "that any award will not cause the [local school] board to run a deficit." Working conditions, pupil-teacher ratios and hours of instructional time will be "studied" by a panel of "experts."

Edmonton, Alberta, Wobs responded with a leaflet calling for a general strike:

"Workers and citizens of Alberta should be outraged that the Klein Government has rammed through criminal legislation that outlaws the democratic right to strike by teachers, a right upheld by Alberta courts and by international labour laws. Not satisfied with forcing the teachers back to work and declaring their right to strike void, they went even further in determining what arbitrators can grant as a wage settlement, and voided any bargaining around working conditions.

"The government has used the big stick of state power to strip teachers of their rights; it is clear this government intends to smash the teachers' bargaining organization, the ATA. This is a lesson for all workers who are unionized in Alberta, that we have no rights unless we take them ourselves. The Labour Relations Board and the minister are determined to protect the bosses by allowing scabs, forcing workers to limit their picketing, declaring strikes illegal and making groups of workers 'essential' services.

"It is time for *all workers*, organized or not, to *protest* against this bosses government. When workers challenge the government in court and they succeed, as the teachers did, the government merely changes the rules of the game. *This is class war.*

"The attack on the teachers and the ATA is an attack on all unionized workers in Alberta. It is time we fought back.

"The Industrial Workers of the World calls on workers and citizens to protest at the upcoming Progressive Conservative convention... Along with the attacks on our democratic right to organize and strike, this government intends to privatize health care, education, social services, and all aspects of the public sector. In a boom economy the greedy fat cat capitalists demand more and more profits, and this government intends to feed them with low-paid workers, temporary and non-union jobs, and a fire sale on all public sector services.

"It is time for the labour movement to act. *It is time for a general strike!*

"Protests are not enough, we need to shut this province down, and remind the bosses and their puppets in the legislature that without us not a single dime of profit can be made. It is the workers who create all wealth, not the capitalists. It is workers who teach our children, not the president of Syncrude. It is workers who heal us not private insurance companies.

"Let's send the bosses and Klein a message they will never forget: Let's shut this province down! *We have the power.*"

For more info, see the Edmonton IWW web page at: http://edmonton.iww.ca

Anti-globalization...

continued from page 8

demo was a call centre running an 'ethnomarketing' business: Turkish-speaking workers selling telecom products to Turkish-speaking customers. When the workers tried to set up a works council the company reacted with dismissals. The remaining workers did not venture out onto the street, but must have been pleased with the strong demonstration. Support from the German side was unfortunately not forthcoming.

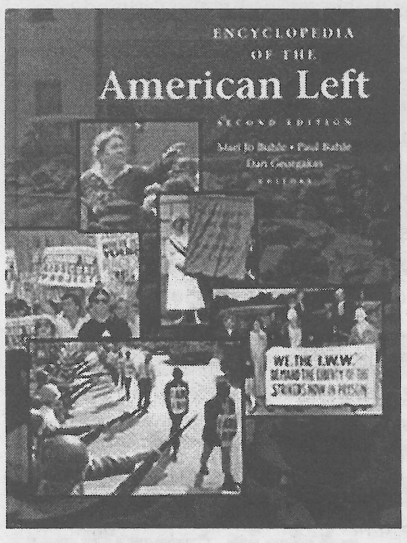
In the working group we want examine the question of how we can keep up with such struggles, what they have to do with us and how we can relate to them. (A-Infos)



BOOKS FOR REBEL WORKERS



Happy May Day!



Encyclopedia of the American Left

Second Edition. Edited by Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, and Dan Georgakas

The first comprehensive reference book on radicalism in the United States from the Civil War to the present, this work fills serious gaps in basic reference materials on American politics, labor, and culture by focusing on radicals rather than reformers. Merging previously unutilized sources such as oral history with the wealth of insight available from feminist, ethnic, racial studies and popular culture analysis as well as traditional scholarly approaches, their efforts retrieved a hitherto inaccessible history.

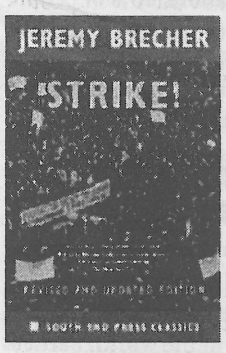
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May Day: A Short History of the International Workers' Holiday 1886-1986



By Philip S. Foner

This is the story of May Day, a holiday born in the USA a hundred years ago and since 1890 celebrated by working people the world over. In this short history, Foner clarifies the dramatic origins of labor's May Day and recounts many highlights of May Day celebrations through the years. Here is a story with a multitude of heroes and heroines who protest the injustices of their time. In a stirring panorama, labor's May Day banners affirm the struggle for a better life now and the bright promise of a future still to be won. **$6.95 Soft cover, 184 pages**



Strike! By Jeremy Brecher

Since its original publication in 1972, no book has done as much as *Strike!* to bring American labor history to a wide audience. *Strike!* narrates the dramatic story of repeated, massive, and often violent revolts by ordinary working people in America. Strike! tells this exciting hidden history from the point of view of the rank-and-file workers who lived it. A new introduction places the problems faced by working people today in the context of 120 years of labor history. A new chapter reveals the little-known labor dimension of the Vietnam-era revolt. And a new concluding chapter interprets the rank-and-file labor struggles of the past 25 years, including the 1997 Teamsters strike against UPS, in a unique "first draft" of the labor history of our era. **$22.00 Soft cover, 426 pages**

Ani DiFranco & Utah Phillips Compact Discs



"Fellow Workers isn't an album of alternative rock or folk pop by any stretch. Rather, it's a musical stage on which Phillips tells stories of the American workers' plight and their struggle for rights as the nation developed. And it's a bloody powerful tale he tells, shot through with hardship and death, corruption and plain dirty dealing, and the indomitable spirits of the men and women who refused to bow down and take less than they deserved...Ani DiFranco is the name that will get copies of Fellow Workers into people's homes and into their stereos. But it's Utah Phillips, her grizzled partner on this album, who will keep the CD playing." **$17.00**

The Past Didn't Go Anywhere: Ani remixes Utah's stories from live recordings, this recording is a terrific marriage of electronic, beat-driven music and folktelling traditions. Shelly Poovey from North Carolina's Ha! Zine says, "We hear Utah's concepts of time, history, anarchy, pacifism, and just about any other social abstraction you can conjure. It's definitely mind-candy for the socially conscious listener, luring you into healthy skepticism and levity of self. And it's damn good music at any level — you'll discover new nooks and crannies to lay your head on every time you hear it." **$17.00**

IWW Baseball Cap



A beautiful black cap with red under the visor. Embroidered logo in white and red, red eyelets, and "Solidarity Forever" embroidered on the back of the cap. Union made & embroidered, one size fits all. ***$16.00***

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IWW Bumperstickers: $1.50 each
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Class-Conscious Environmentalism

The Fate of the New Carissa
by Arthur J. Miller A first-hand account of a ship explosion which filled Oregon's Coos Bay with chemicals, fuels, and filth. Also discusses the "flag of convenience" system which allows ship owners to escape safety, environmental, and labor laws. **16pp $2.00**

Labor History

The Wobblies at War: A History of the IWW and the Great War in Australia
by Frank Cain

The Australian IWW, which got started in 1907 to bring the flag of "One Big Unionism" down-under, was a major force in opposing Australia's involvement in World War I. So efficient was its Anti-War campaign, which opposed conscription, blind nationalism, and the thirst for blood of the employing class all over the world, the Australian government banned the union in 1916, and attempted to drive the organization into the ground in 1917 by deporting prominent leaders. **$16.00**

Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology
Compiled and edited by Joyce L. Kornbluh
Culled from Wobbly periodicals from the movement's founding in 1905 to the present, *Rebel Voices* presents pamphlets, stories, songs, poems, courtroom testimony, skits, cartoons and illustrations that bring the story of the "minutemen of industrial unionism" to life in native accents. – *Detroit Labor News* **$24.00**

Blackboard Unions By Marjorie Murphy
Murphy tells the story of the struggle to unionize public school teachers, a group workers traditionally considered "professionals" but paid starvation wages and denied any say in their working conditions. We learn of the struggle to win the right to organize, efforts to crush radicals in union ranks, and of the union's abandonment of its allies when it was forced to confront civil rights issues at home. While it has been ten years since this book's publication, the tensions between solidarity and professionalization and union democracy and business unionism continue to confront these workers, as does the fight to defend education from the assault on public services that has characterized American political life for decades. **Special price: $10.00**

Solidarity Forever by Stewart Bird, Dan Georgakis, and Deborah Shaffer Oral histories of IWW members. **$13.00**

IWW Literature

Little Red Songbook 36th Edition
103 labor songs to fan the flames of discontent from around the world, with music. Includes songs by Joe Hill, Billy Bragg, Anne Feeney, Utah Phillips, and more. **$10.00**

One Big Union An introduction to the structure, methods and goals of the Industrial Workers of the World. **$2.00**

A New Union Vision by Arthur J. Miller
A discussion of the present-day need for democratic, revolutionary unions. **$2.00**

The General Strike by Ralph Chaplin
The classic text – a call for organization. **$2.00**

Organizing Help

A Troublemaker's Handbook: How to Fight Back Where You Work-and Win! by Dan La Botz. An encyclopedic work on worker initiative and organizing on the job. Shows that sitdown strikes still aren't dead and immigrant workers can be organized.
262pp $17.00

No Justice, No Piece!: A Working Girl's Guide to Organizing in the Sex Industry by the hell-raisin' hussies who organized the Exotic Dancers at San Francisco's Lusty Lady Theater. Tales of the working conditions at the peep show which inspired a successful SEIU drive, direct action strategies for dealing with wrongful firings, and easy-to-read explanations of the legal process. **$6.95**

Global Workers Organizing

Sweatshop Warriors: Immigrant Women Workers Take on the Global Factory by Miriam Ching Yoon Louie
Sweatshop Warriors highlights the voices of the pioneers of the growing anti-sweatshop movement: immigrant women workers. In this up-close and personal look at these extraordinary organizers, Miriam Ching Yoon Louie records the voices of these working-class heroines sounding the charges for the anti-WTO legions. **256pp $18.00**

Made in Indonesia by Dan La Botz
A dynamic new labor movement emerged in Indonesia in the 1990s, helping to bring down the brutal Suharto dictatorship in 1998. Through rare personal interviews with the activists who are leading the rebirth of struggle for democratic rights in the world's fourth-largest country, La Botz draws valuable lessons for workers in the United States seeking to build international labor solidarity.
256pp $18.00

Union Democracy

Democracy Is Power: Rebuilding Unions from the Bottom Up by Mike Parker & Martha Gruelle. This book offers practical ideas of how the rank and file can run unions. Major discussion of Teamsters for a Democratic Union experiences in this area. **254pp $17.00**

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Argentine workers seize, run firms

As Argentina's economy continues to melt down, increasing numbers of workers are seizing failing firms, making everything from flour to tractors, and running them themselves.

In the garment district of Barrio Once, three dozen workers seized the Brukman brothers' factory Dec. 18, refusing to leave until their back wages are paid. In the meantime, a six-worker Commission of Internal Struggle is running the factory, buying raw materials, selling men's suits, and paying bills (including utility bills they inherited from the owners) and wages from the proceeds.

After police evicted them in March, workers retook the factory, which they now occupy 24 hours a day.

Since workers took charge, conditions have improved dramatically. Before workers had to gulp down lunch in 15 minutes over their machines; now they take an hour break and cook meals in the factory kitchen. Freed from having to support their bosses, workers have been able to increase their pay. There are no managers hovering overhead. And workers have been exploring opportunities to increase employment by expanding beyond the limited market for men's suits.

Zambian miners seize officials over unpaid benefits

Angry mine workers at Zambia's Roan Antelope Mining Corp (Ramcoz) briefly detained two government ministers April 10, demanding payment of their termination benefits. The two were trying to persuade workers to release a manager being held over the same grievances.

"Miners blocked the road leading out of the mine plant with logs and tree branches to prevent the ministers from leaving. Police fired teargas and rubber bullets to disperse the miners," a resident told Reuters.

Mines Minister Davison Mulela and Copperbelt deputy minister Patrick Kafumukache were visiting the Luanshya mine, one of two mines owned by Ramcoz on the Zambian copperbelt, when 500 workers detained them.

Zambian copper mines have faced technical problems since being privatized two years ago, coinciding with low world prices for the metal. Ramcoz, one of several ailing firms on Zambia's once-thriving copperbelt, was put under receivership by the Zambia National Commercial Bank in 2000. Some 4,200 Ramcoz workers are still waiting for their termination benefits.

Anglo American recently announced it was pulling out of its Konkola Copper Mines Plc (KCM), which runs the Konkola and Nchanga copper mines and Nampundwe pyrite mine. KCM accounts for 67 percent of Zambia's metal production and is a key mining employer.

IMF demands privatization of Ghana water supply

Although Ghana was recently awarded debt relief from the IMF and the World Bank, the conditions requires the government to raise public utility rates, following on a previously mandated 95 percent price hike in water fees in May 2001.

"The current water tariff rates that the government of Ghana and the World Bank think are below the market rate, are already beyond the means of most of the population in Ghana," says Rudolf Amenga-Etego of the National Coalition Against Privatisation of Water. "So, how will the population possibly be able to absorb a so-called market price in the context of privatization?"

Protests against the IMF policy of treating basic necessities such as water as a common commodity to be bought and sold in the market place can be sent to: Horst Kohler, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund, 700 19th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20431 email: hkohler@imf.org



ARTWORK: CLIFF HARPER

Russian sweatshop workers win strike

The workers at the Lipchanka sweatshop garment factory in Lipetsk, 300 km southeast of Moscow, have won a victory after they defied the new Labor Code brought in by Putin last winter and went on strike.

The action is sure to inspire other Russian workers to refuse to accept this legislation, which condemns them to starve. The boss at Lipchanka had delayed payment of several months' wages, intimidated union activists, coerced workers into signing statements that they were taking "voluntary" unpaid leave, and forced the remaining staff to take on their work load at no extra pay.

It was the last straw. The workers, many of them single mothers, struck. Within 24 hours the boss surrendered, paid all debts and agreed to restore previous work norms.

Under the draconian new Labor Code brought in last December, only those actions supported by over 50% of the entire work force in any enterprise are legal. As most strikes in Russia do not fulfil this requirement, the overwhelming majority of actions are now outside the law.

Since the restoration of the market system, nonpayment of wages has become extremely common in Russia. Sometimes workers wait a year for money owed. Payment in kind, such as coffins or condoms, already very widespread, has now officially become legal under the new labor code.

The majority of Lipchanka workers live in grinding poverty. Wage delays meant that many received less than $10 for the entire month of February. Meanwhile their boss lives in a luxurious villa, and the western firms who outsource their clothing here, including well-known brand names from the USA and Germany, make huge profits.

Chinese labor leaders indicted for illegal assembly

Prosecutors in the northeastern Chinese city of Liaoyang have indicted Yao Fuxin and three other labor leaders, charging them with "illegal assembly, marches and protests."

The indictments came after worker unrest rocked China's northeastern industrial rust belt for much of March.

Yao was arrested March 17 for his role in organizing protests that drew up to 30,000 workers from 20 factories in the antiquated industrial heartland of Liaoning province.

Pang Qingxiang, Xiao Yunliang and Wang Zhaoming were arrested March 20 after paramilitary police forcefully removed hundreds of protesters from the city government offices where they had gathered.

The four leaders face up to five years imprisonment. The Liaoyang indictments appeared to back down from earlier, more serious charges that the protesters had "colluded with hostile foreign forces."

Demonstrators called for unpaid wages, severance compensation and an end to corruption in state enterprises.

Korea detains 110 unionists

More than 100 members of the Korean Government Employees' Union were arrested March 23 at the union's official founding ceremony. Seven officials of the KGEU and other unions present were also arrested.

It is the second civil servants' union to form in defiance of the government ban. The government says it will discipline the 103 workers arrested for joining the meeting.

KCTU leaders ousted

Officials of the militant Korean Confederation of Trade Unions have resigned en masse, in the face of growing discontent with a privatization agreement with the government. Critics vowed to reject the accord and organize a massive strike if the government goes ahead with privatization plans.

The organization confronted a similar challenge in 1998 when it signed a government-management-labor agreement that legalized mass layoffs during the era of mass corporate restructuring. After criticism mounted, key officials stepped down.

Strike forces release of Colombian unionist

A leader of an oil workers' union was freed April 7 by a right-wing paramilitary group which kidnapped him Feb. 25.

Gilberto Torres' kidnapping had sparked a 14-day protest strike by his Workers Union Syndicate that cut output at refineries of the Colombian state oil company Ecopetrol. The strike was suspended April 4 after the paramilitaries said they would free Torres.

Simple solution: No IMF

Toronto Trust Argentina, an "emerging market" investment fund, made huge profits during Argentina's 1995 currency panic. Critics call it "vulture investing," betting on the failure of IMF policies. TTA President Steve Hanke offers a simple cure for Argentina's woes: "Abolish the IMF" and the IMF/World Bank-mandated currency regime.

Fiji gov't calls world labor solidarity "blackmail"

International solidarity pledges from Australian and New Zealand unions are "blackmail and deliberate attempts to sabotage the economy," Fiji Public Enterprise Minister Irami Matairavula said April 8.

The dispute stems from Airports Fiji Ltd.'s refusal to recognize and bargain with the Fiji Public Service Association. Unions have pledged to cut off all air and sea shipments if negotiations do not begin.

UK "union" fingers Airbus wildcat striker for firing

Airbus has sacked the alleged ringleader of a March 14 wildcat strike at the company's Broughton, UK, wingmaking factory. Five other workers were suspended for a week.

More than 2,500 workers walked out March 14 to protest the fact that management was collecting fat bonuses while they had accepted pay and overtime freezes to help keep the plant open.

Managers and shop stewards reportedly fingered the six workers as the "ringleaders" of the strike and agreed on the suspensions and firing. Amicus official Rob Dowie said the union could not comment on its role.

500,000 against the Europe of Capital

A half-million or more people marched through Barcelona March 16 protesting the European Union summit. Thousands more were turned back at the Spanish border.

Organized by the Campaign against the Europe of Capital, the march was so massive that the Barcelona Social Forum – comprised of the institutional left in Catalunya, including the provincial governing "socialists," the official unions (CCOO, UGT), and large NGOs – waited for more than two hours behind their banner, "Another Europe is Possible," for the massive Campaign contingent to pass before giving up and disbanding.

Some 100,000 unionists marched the day before behind a banner demanding full employment and social rights in the European Union, in a protest called by the Confederation of European Trade Unions. That demonstration was dominated by the red flags of Spanish and French left-wing unions.

Some 8,500 police were deployed to keep a watchful eye on anti-globalization and union protests. Security forces cordoned off the area around the summit venue, recognizing that the forces of corporate globalization can proceed only behind walls of police and weaponry.

While the mainstream Social Forum was standing by, local residents were flocking to join the march. Many asked, "This isn't the block with the political parties, is it? I don't want to go with the block of the parties..."

The demonstration on the 16th was historic not just because there were 500,000 people, but also because it was grassroots, anti-capitalist and in opposition to the political classes.

Tens of thousands of people also joined in protests across Spain, providing opportunities for people unable to make it to Barcelona to participate in the resistance.

Following the summit, one of the most widely read newspapers in Catalunya, *El Periodico*, reported poll results which found that before the mobilizations 40% of people in Barcelona supported the anti-globalization movement and that afterward the level of support had risen to 58%. (A-Infos)

International Paper unions forge global network

Leaders from 21 unions on five continents resolved April 11 to create a global union network at International Paper, the largest paper company in the world. Participants came from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Finland, France, Korea, New Zealand, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States, representing tens of thousands of IP employees. IP employs 100,000 people and operates in 22 countries, with sales last year exceeding $26 billion.

"We decided that an effective trade union movement has to operate as globally as the companies where we represent workers," said PACE Vice President Donald Langham.

"IP crosses national borders in search of the highest profits, and the unions present here have resolved to match that corporate globalization with a globalization of workers' solidarity," he said.

The unions pledged to share information on wages and working conditions and take common actions in support of participating unions. They also expressed support for workers currently on strike at IP's Clifton, NJ, cosmetics packaging plant. The workers are members of the Graphic Communications International Union, the International Association of Machinists, and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Postal union OKs job cuts

After a token 15-minute national strike March 26 that went completely unnoticed, Britain's Communication Workers Union reached a deal with Consignia (the privatized post office) to eliminate 30,000 jobs over the next three years on a "voluntary" basis.